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**FAME**

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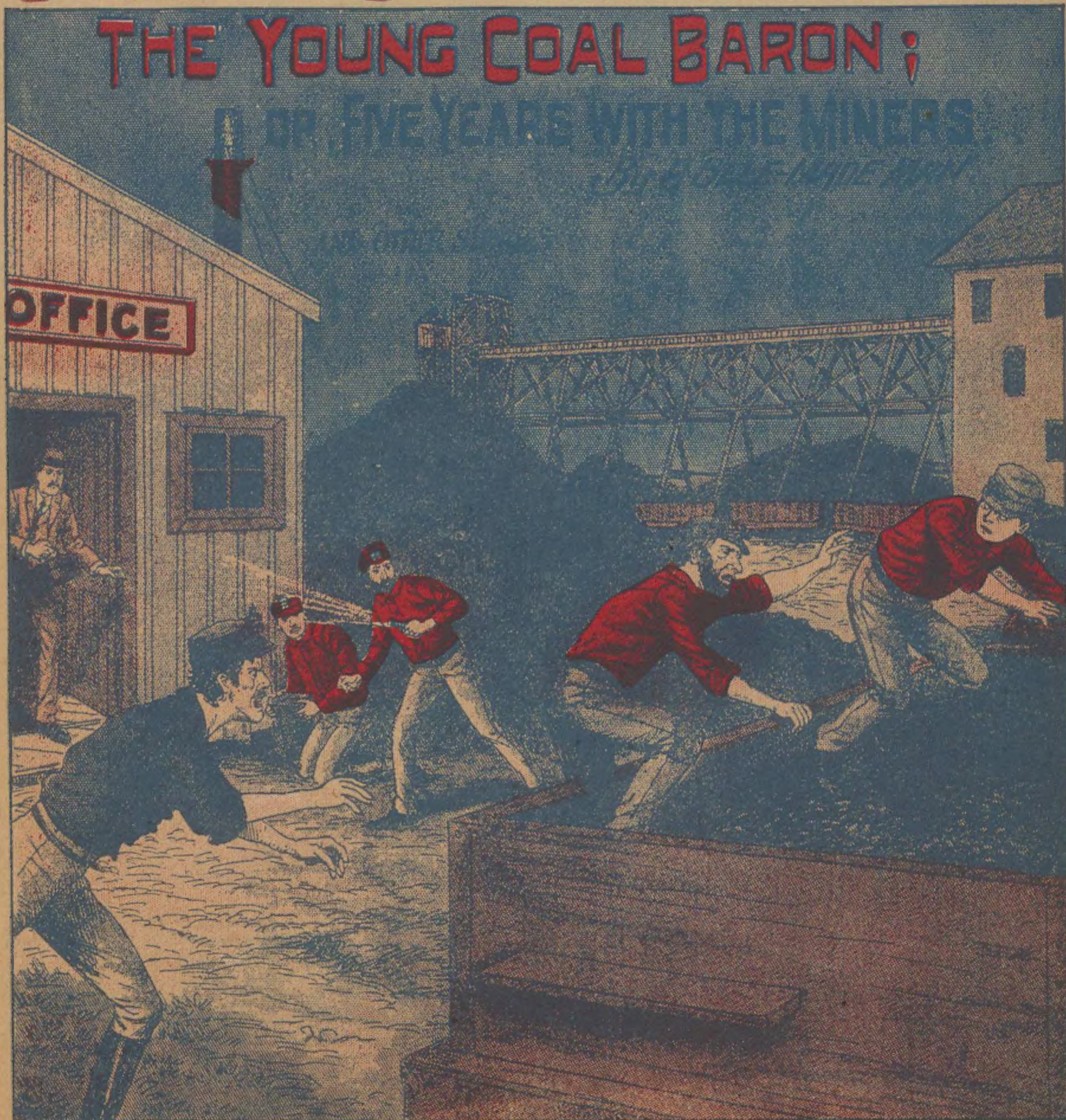
# FORTUNE WEEKLY

STORIES OF BOYS WHO MAKE MONEY.

THE YOUNG COAL BARON;

OR FIVE YEARS WITH THE MINERS.

By FORTY-FOUR MEN



"Don't try to git away," cried Crowley; "'cause if yer do I'll smash yer head with a lump of coal.

Own up that yer come here to spy on us" "Stand back!" cried Joe Duncan.

"Don't you touch me."



# FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY

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## The Young Coal Baron

OR, FIVE YEARS WITH THE MINERS

By A SELF-MADE MAN

### CHAPTER I.—Introducing Joe Duncan.

"Where am I at, anyway?" Joe Duncan asked himself, as he paused at a point where the long, yellow, dusty road swung around the corner of the mountain side and began to descend into a big valley bounded by the Shoshone range.

It was the close of a cloudless July day. The sun had just disappeared behind the near mountain peaks, and all the ravines were filled with yellow light. A distant waterfall looked golden in the fading rays of the sunlight. The boy was hardly in humor to feel entranced over the marvelous beauties of the great Northwest. He had been traveling since daybreak, and was dust-covered and footsore. His earthly possessions were in the limp old carpet-bag at his feet, and he had no home. He seated himself on a boulder, took off his hat and panted for breath. Apparently he was the only human object in the rugged picture spread out for miles and miles in all directions.

"I must have taken the wrong fork, for I don't see any signs of Carson anywhere," he muttered wearily. "I wonder where this road leads to? I haven't met a soul for hours. It must go somewhere. Maybe I'll strike one of those coal mines I heard about at Foxton. I hope it won't take me all night to do it, for I'm dead tired and hungry as a starved bear. I'd give a whole lot for a square meal at this moment. I don't think I was ever so famished in my life before."

Joe sat for a while on the boulder and then resumed his journey down toward the valley. The yellow light had faded into the gloom of fast-approaching night when Joe came in sight of signs of civilization at last. The tired boy uttered an exclamation of satisfaction and tried to hurry his steps, for the smoke curling from the chimney of a good-sized one-story habitation suggested the prospect of a meal.

He could just see the shaft-house and other buildings of what he judged to be one of the coal mines of the district. Further away there was quite a bunch of cabins which he presumed was occupied by the miners. Fifteen minutes later Joe walked up to the open door of the big house. Twenty or more men were eating supper at a table of pine boards, laid on wooden supports, in the center of the room. The odor of fried

venison and coffee made Joe feel faint with hunger. A big, bearded man at the head of the table called out:

"Hello, stranger!"

All the other men turned and looked at Joe, who felt confused and diffident under the focus of so many eyes.

"Where are you bound for, sonny?" asked the bearded man.

"No place in particular," replied the boy, who had started for Carson that morning with no definite object in view, except the possibility of picking up a job.

"Where did you come from?"

"Foxton."

"I mean, where d'ye hail from? Where were you born and raised?"

"Connecticut."

"You've come out West to seek your fortune, I s'pose?"

"Yes."

"I reckon you'll find it if you look far enough," chuckled the man.

The others laughed at this remark, which struck them as witty. Joe, however, didn't see anything funny in it.

"Had your supper?" continued the bearded man.

"No," replied the boy with an eager look in his eyes.

"Had any dinner?"

"Nothin' but a couple of sandwiches I brought from Foxton, and a drink of water from a brook."

"Well, you're pretty nigh hungry, ain't you?"

"I'm awful hungry."

"Then come in and set to. Move over, Brady, and make room for him. I'm from Connecticut myself, sonny, though it's more than thirty years since I left the State, and nobody from there is goin' hungry from this door if I know it."

"I guess I'd better take a wash first," said Joe, looking down at his grimy hands.

"All right. You'll find a pan and a bar of soap at the kitchen door at the back of this buildin'. There's a towel on a roller there, too. Clean up and oil your hair, if you want to, but don't go to puttin' on no full dress suit out of that bag, or there'll be trouble," said the bearded



man with a grin, which remark raised a chuckle all around the table.

Joe dropped his seedy-looking bag just inside the doorway and started for the rear of the building to spruce up a bit. He found a shelf with several pans on it and half a dozen half-used bars of common soap.

A barrel of water, with a dipper on top of the cover, stood beside the shelf. Joe lost no time in washing his face and hands, after he had thumped some of the dust from his outer garments. While he was thus employed, the cook, a big, pock-marked, elderly man, came to the kitchen door with a pipe in his mouth, and looked at the newcomer as well as he could in the darkness.

"Goin' to work in the mine?" he asked, inquisitively.

"I haven't thought about it," answered Joe.

"What did you come here for, then?"

"Because I couldn't help myself."

"How was that?"

"I was on my way from Foxton to Carson. Took the wrong turn where the road forks some miles back and fetched up here."

"That's how you landed at the mine, eh?"

"Yes."

"What were you goin' to Carson for?"

"I thought I might find work to do there."

"What kind of work?"

"Any kind. I'm not particular."

"Couldn't you find anythin' to suit you at Foxton?"

"Nobody wanted a boy."

"Why don't you stay here? I want an assistant to help me get the men's meals. The chap I had helpin' me lit out day before yesterday, and I've got more work than I can attend to. Better stay. I'll speak to the boss about you. The pay is \$30 a month and your keep."

"I'll think about it," replied Joe, who was anxious to reach the supper table.

"Are you goin' in to eat with the men?"

"Yes."

"Well, come around and see me when you're done."

Joe promised that he would and hastened around to the dining-room where he found a place waiting for him.

"Pitch in, sonny," said the bearded man. "We don't stand on no ceremony here. The cook'll fetch you a cup of coffee, and you'll find a clean plate, and a knife and fork in that closet yonder."

Joe helped himself to a plate and a knife and fork, and then got busy.

"I reckon the fodder tastes good, sonny," said the bearded man, watching him.

Joe nodded, with his mouth full.

"Where are you bound for—Carson?"

The boy nodded again.

"Lookin' for work?"

Another nod.

"You can find that right here without goin' no further. The cook wants a general helper. Better have a talk with him about it."

"He spoke to me about the job when I was washing up."

"Did he? He's a decent sort of fellow. The pay is better than you'll get in Carson, and the work ain't so hard, all things considered."

"I guess I'd be willing to stay and try it,"

replied Joe. "I'm not certain of finding work in Carson."

"Dobson, that's the cook, will fix it so you can stay," said the bearded man, who was now the only one left at the table with the boy.

The cook, however, joined them in a few minutes, and before Joe finished his meal he agreed to remain at the mine on trial. As soon as the boy laid down his knife and fork with a sigh of satisfaction—a silent intimation that he had eaten as much as he could get away with on that occasion—the bearded man volunteered to take him around to the office and introduce him to the superintendent. Joe accepted the invitation and was soon standing in the presence of the mogul of the mine.

In a quarter of an hour he was back at the eating-house.

"The boss has hired me to help you," he said to the cook.

"All right," replied Dobson with a look of satisfaction. "Haul off your jacket and wash them dishes. There's a kettle of b'ilin' water on the stove."

After Joe had washed the great stack of dishes, and put them away in the closet, he heated some more water, and then with a bar of soap gave the long pine table such a scrubbing as it probably never had before. This was a voluntary act on the boy's part, and when the cook saw what he was about he nodded approvingly. Clearly the boy was a worker, and Dobson foresaw that all the rough labor would be taken off his hands. This caused him to feel very friendly toward his new assistant. Afterwards Joe, without being bidden, swept out the dining-room, and made it look neater than it had been for many a day. There were two bunks in a small addition off the kitchen, and one of these was allotted to Joe, who took possession of it as soon as he could, for he was exceedingly tired after the long walk of the day. The last thing he remembered was seeing the glow of the cook's pipe as Dobson sat on a stool near the outer door puffing away in great contentment.

## CHAPTER II.—How Joe Makes Good.

Joe was aroused at an early hour by Dobson and was told that his first duty would be to fill the cask outside the door with fresh water from an adjacent stream. It took many trips with a bucket to do this.

"Now you can set the table," said the cook. "A plate, knife and fork, and cup and saucer goes with each stool. Then there's the castors, sugar-bowls, and sich. As for milk, we use condensed cream."

The men, when they filed in for breakfast, noticed the improved appearance of the dining-room, and one or two of them commented on it. The bearded man spoke to the cook about it and he replied that his new assistant was responsible for it.

"He's an uncommonly smart boy," added Dobson.

"I should judge he is," replied the other. "You're lucky to get hold of him."

After the men had gone to work Dobson and Joe ate their breakfast, and then the boy washed



all the dishes and tidied the place up again. Joe was then sent to the men's cabins to make up their bunks. When the boy got back he learned from Dobson that there were only two women in the place. One was a cook and the other a general houseworker. They were attached to a large two-story wooden structure, the lower floor of which comprised the office, the superintendent's private room, and the living rooms used by the boss and his clerical help, while the upper floor was partitioned off into bedrooms. The kitchen was in an ell, and the women slept above it. After Joe had peeled a lot of potatoes for dinner and put them in a pot to boil, Dobson put him to work at making biscuits.

"I've had somethin' like lumbago in my back for three days," said the cook, "and it ain't gettin' no better with me on my feet all the time. I'll jest lie down in my bunk and give you a chance. I'll tell you anythin' you want to know about mixin' them biscuits up."

But Joe did not need to be told anything about them. When the men knocked off work at noon and came to dinner, they were loud in their praises of the biscuits.

"I reckon you must have spread yourself on them biscuits, Dobson," said the bearded man. "They're a dooced sight better than usual."

"I didn't make 'em," replied the cook, a bit jealous.

"Who did, then?"

"The boy."

"Go on! You're jokin'," said the other.

"I'm not jokin'. He made them, all right."

"If he did he's a jewel," said the bearded man.

"What do you say, boys?"

"He's all to the good," remarked one of the miners, and his words seemed to express the sentiments of the others.

Only one of the bunch, a surly-looking chap named Dan Crowley, failed to enthuse over the biscuits.

"A new broom sweeps clean," he remarked with a sneer.

Joe, however, did not fall away in his work as time passed. He did his duty as best he knew how, and proved so satisfactory that he was favorably reported to the superintendent at the end of his first week by the cook. Nearly all the men were in the habit of going over to Carson, five miles away, of a Saturday night for what they called a good time.

When they started off for that town on the first Saturday of the boy's sojourn at the mine he asked Dobson where they were all going.

"They're bound for Carson."

"What for?"

"A rip-t'arin' time."

"What kind of time do you call that?"

"You ought to go with them and you'd see. They visit the concert hall and the saloons, and by the time they're ready to come back most of them are b'ilin' full."

"I shouldn't care to be with them, then," replied the boy.

"It's bad enough for a man to drink, but I'll allow that it's a heap sight wuss to see a young chap line up at a bar. By the way, you ain't told me nothin' about yourself since you came here."

"Haven't got anything to tell."

"Where were you raised?"

"Stamford, Connecticut."

"Your parents dead?"

"Yes."

"Got any brothres or sisters livin'?"

"No."

"Then you're all alone in the world?"

"Yes."

"I s'pose you feel kind of lonesome like sometimes, don't you?"

"I have felt as though I didn't count for much in this world," admitted the boy.

"Seems to me you count for a whole lot," replied Dobson. "Where did you learn to cook?"

"Aboard a small freight boat on the Connecticut River."

"Helped the cook, I s'pose, and he taught you what you know?"

"That's about the size of it. By the way, are there many coal mines in this neighborhood?"

"There are several. This is the smallest of the lot—a—kind of one hoss coal mine."

"Why is it one-horse? Doesn't it pan out enough to hire more help?"

"Well, it's owned by the D. & H. Railroad Company. The company doesn't care to mine any more than they can use on their own engines."

"I'd like to own the mine. I'd make things hum here if I did."

"How would you? You don't know nothin' about minin'?"

"How do you know I don't? I worked a year in the Pennsylvania coal fields."

"Then you picked up something about the coal industry?"

"Yes, a whole lot. I'll bet I'd have worked my way up to be superintendent if I had got a fair show."

"Superintendent, eh? You must be uncommonly smart."

"I don't let anything get away from me if I can help it. It's my ambition to get rich some day, and I'll get there unless something stops me."

"I dare say you're right. I s'pose I might have been somethin' better than a cook if I knew more; but I never had no schoolin' to speak of, myself. I had to get out early and hustle for a livin'. I learned to cook in a restaurant in St. Louis. Then I cooked aboard a steamboat on the Mississippi, and by and by I drifted out here."

Joe showed by his conversation that he was ambitious, and determined to get ahead in the world, and Dobson began to entertain a whole lot more respect for him.

Although the boy was in every way the cook's superior, and the man could not help recognizing the fact, he did not put on any airs about his superior attainments.

The tasks he was called on to perform were of a menial nature, but he executed them cheerfully and without complaint, doing everything as well as he could whether it was necessary or not.

Thus nine months passed away, almost, before Joe was aware of the fact.

### CHAPTER III.

#### CHAPTER III.—Joe Finds a Treasure Trove and Makes an Interesting Discovery.

Two miles from the D. & H. R. R. mining property, where Joe was employed, was a big



coal mine owned and operated by the Kohinoor Coal Mining Company.

The Kohinoor people employed a large force of miners, and quite a village of small cottages had been erected by the company to accommodate the employees and their families.

Among such a collection of hardy workers it was natural to find a few pretty rough characters. These men were known as Jim Williams, Ike Davis and Bug Halliday.

As birds of a feather will flock together, Dan Crowley, the one hard character of the D. & H. mine, was hail-fellow-met with these three.

Every Saturday night the quartette was to be seen in Carson, drinking and raising merry Cain, and they had things pretty much their own way.

About the only recreation that Joe had enjoyed since he came to the mine was the long walks he had taken around the country by himself on Sunday afternoons.

During the winter months he had been cut off to a considerable extent from this pleasure by the frequent and heavy falls of snow, which made walking out of the beaten tracks almost impracticable.

With the coming of spring he resumed his trips, and one particularly mild spring Sunday afternoon found him tramping through a wood on the mountain side not over a mile from the Kohinoor property.

Finally he came upon a clearing in the center of which stood a story-and-a-half cabin which appeared to be deserted.

Curiosity induced Joe to inspect the place.

There was really nothing to see but the four walls of two rooms on the ground floor with a ladder in the corner of one leading to the half-story above.

Of course Joe wouldn't be satisfied till he went up the ladder to see what the space above looked like.

Whoever had lived in that cabin had carried everything away with them when they abandoned it except a dilapidated-looking trunk.

They left that in the garret, and it attracted Joe's attention.

Throwing open the cover, which almost fell apart on account of its weakened hinges, Joe found the interior filled with a miscellaneous assortment of rubbish of no value whatsoever.

Joe tossed it out, bit by bit, until he came to the bottom.

"I don't see what I've gained much by going through this old trunk," he said to himself. "I might have known that there was nothing of value in it."

He slammed the cover down without bothering himself about returning the trash.

"Get back into that corner where you belong," he said, giving the trunk a vigorous kick.

The old trunk, which was covered with the hairy skin of some animal instead of leather, was studded with brass knobs, those at the corners being larger than the rest.

The toe of Joe's shoe struck one of the big knobs, and presto! as the trunk slid back to its corner a secret drawer in the bottom sprang open, much to the boy's surprise.

"Hello! What's this?" he cried. "A drawer in the bottom of the trunk. That is something new to me. I wonder if there's anything in it?"

He pulled the drawer all the way open, and

saw an oblong envelope, that looked to be quite bulky, lying in it.

Opening the envelope he uttered a gasp of astonishment. It was filled with brand new \$100 treasury notes which had been out of circulation about thirty years, though, of course, Joe could not tell that fact.

"Gracious! Can this be real money?" exclaimed the boy.

Examining it closer, and noticing the thin red threads that always appear in genuine American paper money, he felt convinced that it was the real stuff. Counting it carefully he found there were exactly fifty bills, or \$5,000. There was not the faintest clue as to the identity of the owner of the money.

Joe now examined the trunk very carefully, inside and out. At one end he made out the initials "J. W." formed in large-headed brass tacks.

"That's a slight clue," he said. "I must make some inquiries about the people who lived here. Yet it seems strange that any person having \$5,000 cash in his possession would live in such a rude house as this. It is hardly better than a log cabin. Well, I'll hide this envelope in the locker under my bunk and say nothing about it for the present."

As he was on the point of descending the ladder his sharp ears heard the sound of voices outside in the clearing, and a moment later Dan Crowley, Jim Williams, Ike Davis and Bug Halliday stepped into the building.

Surprise, as well as curiosity, at the presence of those four rascals in that out-of-the-way spot, together with a strong aversion to meeting the men, kept Duncan from letting on that he was in the building, too.

He soon had reason for congratulating himself on his prudence.

"Now let's get right down to facts, Halliday," Joe heard Crowley say as the four men seated themselves on the floor. "You are sure there's coal on the Staley property, are you?"

"Dead sure of it," replied Halliday. "Ask Williams. He was with me when we both made the discovery."

"I'll guarantee there's coal enough there to make us all wealthy if we can get hold of the ground," spoke up Jim Williams, with a nod of his head.

"How did you find it out?" asked Crowley.

"By accident. This mornin' me and Williams was takin' a short-cut across the Staley property when I spied a rabbit and flung a stone at it. My aim was good and the rabbit was so badly wounded that I seen I could catch it without much trouble. So I gave chase and it led us into a wooded ravine near the old stone cross. As the rabbit could crawl where we couldn't we had some difficulty in gettin' hold of it. When we did, the ground gave way and landed us in a hole a dozen feet deep. Well, we figgered that we was in a bad fix, but we soon found that by followin' the gully, of which the hole was the beginnin', we could probably get out. The gully had been formed by a torrent of water that must have run that way a long while ago. It had eaten a great slice out of the ground for some distance. The sides of that there gully is made of coal and slate. As soon as me and Williams got on to the fact we examined the place carefully and soon



made sure that there's a big fortune under the surface."

"And Staley hasn't any suspicion that there's coal on his property?" said Crowley.

"Of course he hasn't, otherwise he wouldn't be tryin' to find somebody to buy him out cheap, for he wants to git away East."

"It's a wonder the Kohinoor Company wouldn't snap it up," said Crowley.

"They've got about as much coal property now as they kin handle. Besides, the Staley property is believed to be just outside of the coal belt."

"Why is it?"

"Because the ground on both sides of it has been prospected for coal and none was located there."

"Kind of funny, isn't it, that you and Williams should find evidences of coal there?" said Crowley in a doubtful tone.

"Not by no means. There is such things as pockets to a coal belt. They crop up all through the Pennsylvania coal fields. The Staley property is one of them pockets, and the coal in a pocket is always better than at other points within the belt, as a general thing."

"Well, allowin' all you say is true, how are we goin' to buy the ground from Staley?" asked Crowley.

"Chip in, and get a sixty-day option on it. Then we kin look around and find some capitalist who'll be willin' to go in with us and help develop it for a third or a quarter interest. That's my scheme, and I think it's a good one."

"How much is Staley willin' to take for it, cash down?"

"Two thousand dollars."

"How much will it cost us to get the option?" asked Crowley.

"Two or three hundred dollars."

"And s'posin' we can't raise the balance when the time comes, we'll lose our money, won't we?"

"Don't talk nonsense, Crowley. The moment I tell a moneyed man there's coal on the Staley ground he'll sit up and take notice. When I take him to the gully and show him the outcroppin' of the stuff he'll lose no time gettin' in with us on as good terms as he kin make. Or supposin' we conclude to take a lump sum for the option itself, don't you s'pose we could sell it long before the sixty days was up?"

"I don't know about such things," replied Crowley, "but I'm willin' to take your word for it."

"Then you're with us?"

"Sure, I am."

"All right. We'll chip in \$75 apiece tonight, and tomorrow night I'll call on Staley and get the option. Then the four of us won't be nobody's slaves any longer. We'll be bloated coal barons, like the owners of mines around the valley."

#### CHAPTER IV.—In Which Joe Does Not Let the Grass Grow Under His Feet.

The conversation between the four tough denizens of the northwestern coal belt greatly interested Joe Duncan.

"So the Staley property is actually a coal bed?" he mused. "And Staley is hunting around to find somebody to buy the ground from him for \$2,000? If what Bug Halliday told Crowley is true, and

he ought to know a coal outcropping when he sees it, for he's worked long enough in the mines to be familiar with the stuff, then there is a fortune in that property, sure enough. Halliday is going to try and secure an option of the ground tomorrow night. If he gets it he and his pals will be fixed for life if they don't spend their good luck too recklessly. It seems to me that I ought to try and get in ahead of four such rascals as they are. I've got twice as much money as is necessary to buy that land outright. Here is the chance of my life. If I let it get away from me I ought to be kicked. When Fortune plays into a chap's hands like it is playing into mine why shouldn't I get a hustle on to take advantage of the opportunity? By George! I will. I've got till tomorrow night to investigate that gully for signs of coal and put up the coin to buy the property. It won't be dark for three hours yet. Time enough for me to visit the gully right away and see what's to be seen there. If there is coal I'll get off after breakfast tomorrow and try and make the purchase of the land at once. My money is as good as anybody's. The fact that I found it has nothing to do with the matter. I can use it anyway to make my fortune, and then if I ever locate the owner of it I can easily return the money to him. The chances are, however, that I'll never be able to find him."

Joe wasn't the kind of boy to let the grass grow under his feet.

He got out of the loft, and the cabin, too, in short order, and made a bee-line for the Staley property.

Joe hadn't any doubt but he would be able to find the gully in question, for it was the ravine not far from the old stone cross, so Halliday said, and the boy had passed that cross often enough to know the spot by heart.

An hour later he was in the ravine, and it wasn't long before he saw the cave-in where Halliday and Williams had alighted in the gully.

He took a flying leap and landed in the gully himself.

Then he began his investigation of the sides of the gully.

He knew what coal looked like in its natural bed, and he found that Halliday had not overstated the facts at all.

To use a common expression, there seemed to be coal to burn in the vicinity of the gully.

The Staley property was a mine of wealth to the fortunate owner, and Joe determined that he would be the proprietor of it if he could possibly reach that much-to-be-desired end.

He returned to his evening duties at the D. & H. mine with his brain teeming with visions of a future of great prosperity for himself.

He was so excited that Dobson noticed his demeanor and asked what ailed him.

"Oh, I'm just feeling good," he answered.

"You look and act like it," nodded the cook, turning to the stove.

After breakfast next morning Joe told Dobson that he wanted to get off for the morning on important business.

"All right, you can go after you wash the dishes and clean up a little," replied the cook, who was always ready to grant his assistant any reasonable favor.

Joe finished the work and then went over to



the office and asked the superintendent if he could have the loan of his saddle horse.

"I want to go to Carson on important business," he said.

"All right; you can use my horse and welcome."

So in a quarter of an hour Joe was on his way to Carson, the county seat.

He went directly to a well-known lawyer named Stone, who was under great obligations to him because he had saved his little boy from drowning in the Shoshone River one Sunday afternoon in the previous fall.

The lawyer had presented Joe with a watch and chain as a small token of his gratitude; and assured him that if he could ever do him a favor Duncan must not hesitate to call on him and ask it.

The lawyer received him in his office with great cordiality, and after a brief conversation the boy broached the object of his visit.

"I have come to consult you about buying a piece of property," began Joe.

"You mean that you want to buy property for yourself?" asked the lawyer in some surprise.

"Yes, sir."

"What property is it?"

"The twenty or more acres of land owned by George Staley in the Shoshone Valley within a mile and a half of the Kohinoor Coal Mine. He is anxious to get rid of it for \$2,000, and I want to buy it."

"Indeed. Have you the money to pay for it?"

"I have."

"Have you been left a legacy that you wish to invest in land?"

"No, sir. I found the money."

"You found it!" ejaculated Mr. Stone in astonishment.

"Yes, sir, under circumstances that practically make it my own."

He immediately explained all about the finding of the \$5,000 in \$100 bills in the old trunk in the cabin in the woods.

He had brought the envelope with the bills in it with him, and he showed the money to the lawyer.

Mr. Stone looked at the bills, and, noticing the old vignettes on them pronounced them of an issue authorized by act of Congress around the early '70s.

"They don't look as if they ever were in circulation," he said. "They must have been hoarded in that old trunk for thirty years by the owner. Or else, what seems to me more probable, the owner died without revealing the fact that he had money hidden in that secret drawer, and so it has lain there all these years undiscovered. Of course if the owner left any heirs, the money, by right, belongs to them. The difficulty of the case lies in the fact that it would be pretty hard to get at the identity of the owner of that trunk now, even if it could be done, that would not be regarded in law as conclusive evidence that the money was really his. It would only establish a reasonable supposition as to its owner. He, or if he is dead, his heirs, would have to furnish legal proof in support of their claim to the money. As I view the matter only the man who put that envelope in that secret drawer would be able to produce sufficient evidence to support his claim, and in my mind it is a matter of doubt if even he could do it. As the case stands I

should, as a lawyer, advise you that your right to the money is unquestionable. The law of finding is that the finder has a clear title against every one but the owner. Therefore, until the owner of that \$5,000 turns up and proves property it is yours absolutely. Now, about this property you want to purchase. I presume it is worth the money."

"It's worth it, all right."

"Well, as you are a minor you cannot legally purchase or hold real estate in your name," replied Mr. Stone.

"I can't?" exclaimed Joe, blankly.

"That's the law."

"Then I'll be dished out of the chance of my life."

"How is that?"

"Well, I've discovered that there is coal on the Staley land, and that's why I want to buy it. And I want to get it in a hurry, too, for others are after it. But if I can't buy it because I'm a boy then I suppose I'm out of it," said Joe in a grievously disappointed tone.

He then told the lawyer all the particulars, including the conversation he had overheard between Crowley and his associates the afternoon before, and told him that their purpose was to purchase an option on the ground that evening.

"Well, my lad, I owe you a large debt of gratitude for saving my boy's life. You shall get control of this property if it is possible for me to arrange it. I will call on Mr. Staley early this afternoon and see if I can make terms with him. I will buy it temporarily in my own name on a regular thirty-day contract, paying ten per cent. of the purchase money down. That will secure the land. Then it will be necessary that I go before the court and have a guardian appointed to take charge of the property for you till you come of age. That will solve the difficulty."

"Will it, sir?" asked Joe eagerly.

"Yes. Do you know anybody that is competent and reliable whom you would like to have appointed as your legal guardian?"

"No, sir. Unless you'd be willing to accept the responsibility."

"I will do it for you with pleasure," replied Mr. Stone.

"I am very much obliged to you, sir," replied Joe gratefully.

"Don't mention it, my boy. Remember I am under deep obligations to you."

"Then I will leave the \$5,000 I found with you to take charge of for me."

"Very well. I will give you a receipt for it, as I am not as yet your guardian."

Joe then went into further particulars about the Staley property, and advised the lawyer to lose no time in securing the land, as there was no telling but Bug Halliday might get off from work for the purpose of buying the option as early as possible.

"I will attend to the matter right away, Joe," said Lawyer Stone. "You can go back to your work at the D. & H. mine with the full assurance that I will look after your interests the same as if they were my own. I will call on you and let you know whether or not I have been successful in securing the land."

"All right, sir. I am much obliged to you."



## CHAPTER V.—In Which Joe Gets a Guardian and Also a New Job

At five o'clock that afternoon Lawyer Stone dismounted at the eating-house of the D. & H. mine and found Joe setting the table for supper.

The boy rushed outside to greet him.

"Did you get the property, Mr. Stone?" he asked eagerly.

"I did. Here is my copy of the contract which we signed in duplicate. I paid, as you can see, \$200 down, the balance to be paid after the title has been searched, which, as a lawyer, I will attend to myself. Thirty days from today, if there is nothing the matter with Staley's title to the land the property will become yours, subject to the legal obstacles that hedge in a minor according to law. As a matter of fact, a minor has no legal existence in the eyes of the law, though his signature attached to an affidavit, a contract, and a great many other documents, is recognized as legal, and will hold water."

"Well, I'm mighty glad you got the property. I have been uneasy all afternoon lest you might be too late, or that Mr. Staley might have changed his mind about selling."

"You need worry no longer, then. This contract gives you, through me, a cast-iron hold on the land. Mr. Staley could not draw back out now if he learned tonight that there was a million dollars' worth of coal on his place."

"I'm glad to hear that," replied Joe joyfully. "When will you be appointed my guardian?"

"As soon as I bring the matter before the court and the judge is satisfied that I am a proper person to assume the responsibilities of the position."

"I guess there'll be no difficulty on that point," laughed the boy.

The lawyer then bade the boy good-by and rode away, leaving the lad in a flutter of happiness, for he felt that his future was now assured.

That evening Bug Halliday visited Staley to secure a sixty-day option on the property and was paralyzed to learn that Staley had sold the land to a Carson lawyer that afternoon.

His disappointment and rage were intense.

He cursed himself all the way home for not laying off that day and attending to the business in the morning.

There was no help for it, however.

He wondered if the lawyer had learned that there was coal on the property, or, if not, what he wanted the land for.

He had secured the lawyer's name, and he determined to call on him later and see if some arrangement could be made for purchasing his option at an advance.

Bug was willing to bid \$5,000, or even \$10,000 for the ground.

In fact, if he knew how to raise the money he would have been willing to give \$50,000 for the land.

On Thursday of that week Joe was notified to present himself at Mr. Stone's office in the morning.

When he got there the lawyer took him before the judge of the court and the legal steps were taken which established Mr. Stone as his guardian.

The lawyer executed a bond for the faithful

performance of his trust, and then he and Joe returned to his office.

"Now Joe," said Mr. Stone, "I think you'd better give the superintendent of the D. & H. mine thirty days' notice of your intention to leave the company's employ. I am of the opinion that the position you hold at present is quite unsuitable to a boy of your education and prospects."

"All right, sir. Whatever you say goes."

After some further talk the boy returned to the valley.

That evening Joe told Dobson that he was going to throw up his job.

The cook was not pleased to hear of this decision on his part.

He didn't expect to get another assistant half as good as Joe.

"I may remain at the mine in some other capacity and I may not; circumstances will decide," said the boy.

"Have you anything in view there?"

"I have good prospects. I should not tender my resignation here unless I saw the chance of bettering myself."

"One of my time-keepers and general office hands is about to leave. I intended to offer you the place in a few days. I will do so now."

"I will take it with the understanding that I can leave any time after a two-weeks' notice."

"Very well. I agree to that."

"You will not find me unacquainted with office work, as I was employed in the office of the Black Prince Mining Company, in the Pennsylvania coal fields."

"I am glad to hear it. It will make a difference in your wages," said Mr. Bishop. "You may report to me Saturday week, and I will put you at your new duties on Monday."

"Very well, sir."

Mr. Bishop then turned to his desk, and Joe went back to the eating-house.

## CHAPTER VI.—Joe Becomes a Young Coal Baron

Joe notified his guardian that he had accepted an office job in the D. & H. mine, subject, however, to future developments, and the lawyer approved of his action.

Accordingly the boy removed his personal belongings to a room in the office building, and began his new duties on the date set by the superintendent.

Thirty days from the time when the lawyer signed the contract to buy the Staley property, the deed for the same was duly executed in Mr. Stone's name and the land passed into the possession of Joe's guardian, and the matter was duly reported to the court.

Experts were hired to prospect the land for coal and their report as to the quantity and quality of the mineral was so favorable as to induce Lawyer Stone to seriously consider the formation of a company to work the product.

When the facts got out it gave rise to some excitement among the other mine owners of the valley.

They were much chagrined to know that they had permitted a valuable plot of land, which they might have bought for a song, slip through their fingers.



Six months elapsed and things went on in their customary groove.

At the end of that time Mr. Stone came back to Carson entirely recovered.

In the course of a month or so he resumed his efforts toward the formation of the new coal company.

He put the scheme in the hands of an experienced promoter, and by spring several capitalists were interested in the project.

Articles of incorporation were drawn up and submitted to the proper State official, who, in time, approved of them, and the new corporation, under the name of the Northwestern Coal Mining Company, was duly authorized to mine coal under the laws of the State.

At the first regular meeting of the company Joe Duncan was not only elected a member of the board of directors, but also president.

This was brought about through his control of the majority of the shares of stock, and the matter was cut-and-dried before the meeting took place.

That was the first intimation the boy's business associates and superiors had that the modest and gentlemanly junior clerk of the D. & H. mine had blossomed out into a young coal baron.

Joe at once resigned his position with the D. & H. people, took possession of an unpretentious office in Carson, and the ball was set rolling.

The necessary buildings for the new mine were soon in course of erection, and the requisite machinery contracted for.

Joe called on the general manager of the D. & H. Railroad, and arranged to have the company's branch track, which terminated at the Kohinoor mine, continued to the new corporation's property.

At length after several months of preparation, everything being in readiness to begin operations, a small number of miners were employed to begin work, and this force was gradually added to as the conditions warranted.

Six months later, when Joe had been three years and a half among the miners of the Shoshone Valley, business at the new Northwestern mine was proceeding at a very prosperous rate, and the young coal baron, as Duncan was now generally called, had demonstrated his ability to conduct the affairs of the company in a manner highly creditable to himself and satisfactory to the stockholders.

Of course he received much valuable assistance from his guardian, but had he not possessed good business sagacity, tact, and a considerable knowledge of the business, he could not have succeeded in holding his own in such an important position as head of the company.

As it was, he won the entire confidence of the board of directors, the members of which practically comprised all the stockholders of the company, for the Northwestern Coal Mining Company was what is known as a close corporation.

Joe was now nearly twenty years of age, and it was about this time that he first met Hattie Stone, the eighteen-year-old daughter of his guardian, who had been away for three years, barring vacations, at a well-known Western seminary for young ladies.

Hattie had heard considerable about Joe from her father, and she was quite anxious to make his acquaintance.

Three times at the lawyer's invitation Joe had

gone specially to Carson to meet the fair girl, but a combination of circumstances had disappointed them both.

They were destined to meet, however, under conditions not of their own seeking, and more strenuous than either would have desired could they have controlled their actions.

It was midsummer, Joe had been just four years in the coal mining belt, and Miss Hattie was home for her long vacation, with one year more of schooling between her and graduation.

Joe had not been at his office in Carson for a month, but, attired in rough clothes almost similar to those worn by the miners, was superintending operations at the mine in the place of the manager, who had been called to his home in a distant State by the critical illness of his old mother, to whom he was greatly attached.

Hattie, knowing that the young coal baron had his office in Carson, fully expected to meet him immediately on her arrival at home.

She was intensely disappointed to learn that he was at the mine and likely to stay there for some time.

"It is just too provoking for anything, pa," she said with a pout. "I'm dying for an introduction to Mr. Duncan, and yet something always turns up to prevent our coming together."

"It certainly is a bit singular, my dear," admitted her father. "I've done my best to have you know one another, but circumstances have nullified my efforts. However, you are sure to meet him this time if you'll only be patient. As soon as I've finished with this case I have in court we'll ride over to the mine together, and then the oft-deferred pleasure of meeting Joe Duncan will be yours."

"I hope so."

"You'll find him a splendid young fellow. I've never met a boy that I liked better. He's as bright as a new dollar, and smart as——"

"There, now, I've heard all that before, a dozen times. Don't praise him too much or I'll expect to meet a prodigy; and if he should not come up to my expectations I shall be too awfully disappointed for anything. Probably in that case I will not care to cultivate his acquaintance. By the way, I don't think you ever told me whether he's handsome or not."

"Good looks, my dear, are a matter of secondary importance when compared with——"

"There, that will do. I know what you are going to say. Let me tell you, however, that good looks have considerable to do with a young man in my opinion. Now, is he good-looking?"

"Yes, I think he may be considered so."

The reply seemed to be satisfactory to Miss Hattie, and she waltzed across the room, humming a popular air to which her feet kept time.

Her father put on his hat and started for his office.

Hattie left the window and went to her room to look over her new summer gowns and consider which one she would wear that evening to a reception to which she was invited.

When she had made her pick she sat by the window and read a late novel till the maid knocked at her door and announced that luncheon was on the table.

After the meal a daring idea occurred to her.

"I'll just ride out to the Northwestern coal mine all by myself this afternoon and see if I can



get a peep at this wonderful young coal baron without giving him a chance to suspect who I am."

She clapped her hands with mischievous satisfaction, and went out to the stable to tell the man to saddle her pony and bring him around to the front door in an hour.

## CHAPTER VII.—Held Up on the Road.

About the time that Hattie Stone left her home on her pony en route for the Northwestern coal mine, Joe Duncan mounted his horse and started for the Kohinoor mine to see if he could borrow half a dozen coal cars which he needed until the railroad company sent him a bunch promised for the morning.

He expected to have no difficulty in getting the use of them, for he had heard that a section of the Kohinoor mine was flooded that morning, and that work had stopped in that part until the water could be pumped out.

Reaching the office of the big company he saw the superintendent and preferred his request.

It was immediately granted, and the engineer of the dummy locomotive was given orders to push six cars down to the Northwestern mine.

Joe stayed a while talking to the superintendent about the accident in his mine and then started back for his own place.

Among the men who had been laid off that day by the partial stoppage of work at the Kohinoor mine were Crowley, Williams, Davis and Halliday.

These four choice spirits worked together in the same gallery, and when they found that there was no work for them that day they went to Halliday's cottage and proceeded to get corned over a large demijohn of whisky which, contrary to the regulations of the company, Bug kept in his house.

They did not go so far as to get blind drunk, for they were afraid they would be found out and discharged, but they got full enough to feel more than usually ugly and reckless.

Around the time that Joe was sitting in the office of the superintendent of the Kohinoor mine, the rascally quartette left the little mining village and started off down the road toward the Northwestern mine.

"It's an infernal shame that we were cheated out of that Staley property," growled Halliday, for about the hundredth time. "We ought to be ridin' in our carriages now instead of trampin' the road like slaves."

"That's right. And who's doing the grand in our place but that cussed little monkey who was washin' dishes and helpin' the cook at the D. & H. when I was there?" said Crowley. "Now people call him a young coal baron and say he's worth a million. What right has he to all that luck? And how came he to get into the butter-tub? There's a mystery behind that chap. It was for him that the lawyer bought the land from Staley ahead of us. Why did the young imp want that property?"

"I heard that he worked in the Pennsylvania coal fields afore he came out here," replied Crowley.

"He did? Then why didn't he go into the mine instead of hangin' around the eatin-house helpin' the cook?"

"How do I know? I never asked him."

"Dern him! He ought to be made to ante up with us," said Ike Davis.

"As Bug discovered that coal it belongs to us by rights," said Williams.

At that moment the patter of a horse's hoofs along the road behind them attracted their attention, and they looked around to see who was coming.

It was a pretty girl in a neat-looking riding-habit, mounted on a coal-black pony.

The reader will scarcely need to be told that it was Hattie Stone on her way to the Northwestern mine.

Halliday, in his befuddled condition, thought she was the daughter of the vice-president of the Kohinoor mine, who lived in Carson and was in the habit of riding around the country whenever she took a fancy to do so.

"Here comes that gal who reported me that day," he snarled.

The others growled out an imprecation all around.

"I s'pose we hain't got no right in the road when she comes along," continued Halliday. "We ought to lie down in the dust and let her ride over us. I s'pose if we don't make way for her, and take off our hats, she'll use the whip on the whole of us."

"She wouldn't hit me a second time, you kin swear to that," snarled Crowley. "Them kind of gals ought to be taught a lesson."

"Let's hold her up?" grinned Davis recklessly. "I'd like to ride that hoss myself, and I reckon I've as much right to do it as she has."

The four men were in the humor for any kind of high-handed proceeding, and they fell in with their companion's suggestion.

The coal barons had been sitting on their necks, in their opinion, for years; it was high time that the worm turned.

The result was that when the unsuspecting Hattie galloped up, Williams grabbed her pony by the bridle and brought the animal to a stop, while the other three surrounded the girl and began to insult her, calling her a dudess, an aristocratic idler, and similar expressions.

Had Hattie remained passive under their coarse jibes they would have let her go as soon as they had exhausted their vocabulary of expressions.

Miss Stone, however, was an unusually spunky girl.

While it is true she was somewhat frightened by their aggressive behavior, her nerve did not give way.

"Yank her off her hoss, and let her feel how it is to walk," said Davis. Reckless as they were they had not the nerve to actually lay hands on the young lady. They made a bluff to grab her, laughing rudely as she drew back. Fearing they intended to unseat her, Hattie raised her whip and struck right and left at them. The lash cut both Halliday and Crowley across the face.

The blow aroused all their slumbering fury, and they sprang at her in earnest. Hattie struck her pony a sharp cut in the flank, and the surprised animal jumped forward, dragging Williams off his feet. Crowley grasped the girl's arm at that moment, and the bounding pony threw her back in the dust. She uttered a thrilling scream, while the animal, freeing himself



from Williams, went galloping down the road, riderless.

At that exciting moment Joe Duncan came in sight around a turn in the road a few hundred yards away. He had heard Hattie's scream, and now he saw her struggling in the grasp of Crowley and Halliday. All his chivalry for the sex came to the fore, and he dashed down the road to her rescue.

## CHAPTER VIII,—In Which Hattie Stone Has the Surprise of Her Life.

He was on the rascals before they were hardly aware of his approach. Springing from his horse Joe struck Crowley a heavy blow behind the ear, stretching him a heap on the ground. Then he slugged Halliday in the face and catching Hattie in his arms drew off toward his horse, which had stopped by the roadside a few yards away. Recovering from their surprise the four ruffians advanced upon him in a threatening way. Joe was unarmed, but his sharp eye discovered a stout piece of wood in the road. Seizing it and putting the girl behind him, he awaited their attack without fear.

"Blame you for your interference!" cried Halliday. "It wasn't your funeral, but it will be now."

"I know him," cried the enraged Crowley. "It's the young coal baron."

"The boy that cheated us out of our rights!" ejaculated Halliday. "Down him, fellers."

They made a combined rush at Joe. Smash! Joe's club swung with all the force of his muscular arm and came in contact with Halliday's head. The ruffian dropped like a stone, and Crowley pitched over his legs.

The other two were thrown into momentary confusion. Seeing his advantage, Joe leaped forward, sweeping the club from side to side. Neither rascal could escape his onslaught. Williams caught it on his chest and slipped down, and Davis received a blow on the head that sent him staggering away. Joe gave them no time to recover, but belted Crowley as he rose to his feet and he sank to the dust again.

Williams saw another blow coming his way, but his head was groggy with the fumes of liquor that he could not escape, and Joe laid him out as stiff as a poker. The young coal baron, satisfied with the results he had achieved, led the young lady to his horse, and assisting her into the saddle, sprang up behind her, and encircling her with his arms so as to reach the bridle reins, started his animal at a slow trot down the road.

"How came those rascals to attack you, miss?" he asked. "And where is your horse?"

"I was riding down the road on my pony and saw those men walking ahead of me," Hattie answered. "When I came up to them one of them seized my pony by the bridle while the others gathered around and used the most insulting language to me. Then they started to pull me off my pony. I struck at them with my whip, and then I lashed the animal thinking to break away from them. But one of the men grasped me by the arm and when the pony jumped ahead I was pulled off the saddle. Then I screamed

and you came up. How brave you are to attack the four of them in my behalf," she said admiringly.

"Oh, any man would have done the same as I did under the circumstances," he said lightly.

"I am not sure that they would," she answered doubtfully. "Besides, you are hardly more than a boy, while those men were big, strong, and desperate-looking. I am sure you are remarkably plucky, and I am very grateful to you for aiding me."

"You are welcome, miss. I guess that's your pony ahead of us, nibbling grass by the roadside."

"Yes, that's Prince." Joe rode up near the animal, dismounted and helped the girl down. Then he led the pony up and assisted her into the saddle.

"I guess you feel more comfortable now," he said with a smile. "Now, miss, if there is anything more I can do for you let me know. Were you going anywhere in particular, or merely down the road for a ride?" Hattie smiled down at the good-looking young fellow and wondered who he was.

"I was going as far as the Northwestern mine," she replied. "Perhaps you are going there yourself?"

"I am, and it will give me great pleasure to accompany you if you have no objection to my society," replied Joe.

"Objection!" she exclaimed. "Why, I shall be delighted to have you for my escort."

"Thank you, miss," said Joe with a polite bow that caused Hattie to think him a most gentlemanly young man. Joe walked over to his horse, mounted him and rejoining the girl they rode on down the road together.

"Are you acquainted with any one at the Northwestern mine?" Joe asked.

"No, but I know the president of the mine, Mr. Duncan, by reputation," she replied.

"By reputation! Then you have never seen him?" said Joe with an odd smile.

"No, I have not. To tell you the truth, in confidence, remember," laughingly, "I came out here specially this afternoon to try and get a look at him."

"Why so?" smiled Joe.

"I have heard so much about him that my curiosity is piqued. Really, he seems to be a most extraordinary young man."

"That so? This is news to me, miss. Who told you that he is an extraordinary young man?"

"My father."

"Your father?"

"Yes. You may have heard of Lawyer Stone, of Carson. He is my father."

"What!" gasped Joe, in astonishment. "Mr. Stone is your father?"

"Yes," she nodded sweetly.

"Then I suppose you are Hattie Stone, who has been away at the St. Elmo Seminary?" said Joe, cycling her with the most intense interest.

"Yes. How did you know my name, and that I was away at boarding-school? Is it possible that you know my father?" she added with a fresh interest in her stalwart and nervy escort.

"Oh, yes, I know him, Miss Stone," chuckled Joe.

"Dear me, I'm glad to hear that. You will



tell me your name, won't you, so I can tell my father to whom I am under such a great obligation?"

"Certainly, when we reach the mine."

"Why not now? Really, I am very anxious to know who you are."

"I might be the president of the Northwestern mine," laughed Joe.

"No," she replied, shaking her head, "you are not Mr. Duncan."

"How can you say that when you admit that you have never seen him?"

"But I'm sure that he's very different from you."

"In what way?"

"Well, I don't think he's half as brave as you are, or—as good-looking," she added, blushing.

"Thank you for the compliment, but I'm afraid you are wrong," laughed Joe.

"You know him well, then?"

"Yes, I've known him for a considerable time—longer, in fact, than any one else in this neighborhood."

"Indeed! Dear me," she said in some confusion, "you mustn't tell him what I said to you about him. I should die of embarrassment."

"I don't remember that you said anything he wouldn't like to hear."

"I wouldn't want him to learn for the world that I came out here specially to get a look at him."

"Why not? He would regard that as a great compliment."

"Do you know, I am somewhat puzzled about you," said Hattie. "You are dressed just like an ordinary miner, and yet your conversation and deportment are far above that level. Really, you are not a miner, are you?"

"No, but I am obliged to go down into the galleries so often that I adopted this dress as the most suitable I could wear."

"Then you are connected with the Northwestern Company?"

"Yes."

"In what capacity?"

"I am acting superintendent at present," said Joe, as he led the way to his office.

"Acting superintendent! Why, I thought that Mr. Duncan was taking the superintendent's place while he was away."

"I am Joe Duncan, and I am very glad to meet you at last, Miss Stone."

"You are—Mr. Duncan?" gasped Hattie, with a bewildered look.

"Yes, I am that extraordinary young man."

"My gracious!" she ejaculated, her face turning crimson. "What must you think of me?" She buried her face in her hands, clearly both mortified and distressed.

"I think just what I remarked a while ago—that you are the nicest girl I ever met in my life, and I consider it an honor to make your acquaintance even under the strenuous circumstances which brought us together for the first time."

## CHAPTER IX.—Chiefly Concerning the Young Coal Baron and the Lawyer's Daughter.

Joe's words and courteous manner did much to put Hattie at her ease once more.

"So you are really and truly Joe Duncan?" she said.

"I am, really and truly," he replied.

"I am glad of it," she said frankly. "I am glad to find that you are everything my father said you were. I was afraid after hearing him sound your praises so much that I might be disappointed in you."

"Then you are not disappointed?"

"How can I be after the great service you rendered me on the road?"

"I would have done that for anybody, Miss Stone, for it was my duty to interfere between a bunch of ruffians and the helpless object of their cowardly attack. But I cannot help admitting that I feel a greater pleasure in knowing that I saved you, whom I have been anxious to meet for so long. Your father has been a good friend to me, Miss Stone, and I am delighted to feel in serving you I have also served him," said Joe earnestly.

"He will be very grateful to you, as grateful as I am, and so will my mother," she answered.

"All right, Miss Stone; now let us talk about something else." His frank and manly way won her confidence, and made a deep impression on her. His grit under strenuous conditions had already compelled her admiration. Altogether she was obliged to admit to herself that he was the nicest young man she had ever met, and she had met some nice ones in her time. Indeed, he caused quite a flutter around the region of her heart, and perhaps she herself produced similar sensations in the breast of the young coal baron.

Inside of five minutes they were conversing together just like old friends. Hattie had a piquant manner and a merry laugh that stamped her as a vivacious young lady, and the longer Joe was in her society the more he admired her. At length she said she guessed it was time for her to go home.

"Well, if you must go I suppose you must," replied Joe. "I think it would be advisable for me to accompany you as far as the outskirts of town, for it is possible those four rascals may be lurking somewhere along the road."

"I should be glad to have you do so, if you can spare the time," she said.

"Don't mention time, Miss Hattie, when it's a question of serving you," he replied gallantly.

"Thank you," she answered with a bewitching smile.

"If you have no objection to waiting a quarter of an hour until I transact a small matter of business at the mine I will then be entirely at your disposal," he said.

"Oh, I'll wait. I'll amuse myself with this magazine until you come back." He went away and within the stipulated time was back again.

"Now we will go," he said. He assisted her into her saddle, mounted his own horse, and off they rode in the direction of Carson. Before he locked up the office, however, Joe strapped a heavy six-shooter around his waist, for he did not care to be taken at a disadvantage again if he met the four ruffians, and they tried to get revenge for their previous defeat.

"It does seem funny, Miss Hattie, that after all our failures to become acquainted in the usual conventional way we should be thrown together in such a sensational manner as we were this afternoon," said Joe as they rode slowly along.



"It does; indeed," she smiled. "Seems just like a storybook where the heroine gets into danger and the stalwart and handsome hero pops up at the right moment to save her."

"And then they get married and live happily ever after," he added with a laugh. Hattie blushed and turned her head away.

"On the whole, as long as you were neither badly frightened nor injured, I'm glad that we came together in so unconventional a way. If we hadn't we would still be strangers, and I wouldn't know what I was missing in not having the pleasure of your acquaintance, and your own curiosity as to the personality of that extraordinary young chap named Joe Duncan would have remained unsatisfied. Now you'll have quite an exciting story to tell your father and mother at dinner, and that ought to repay you for the inconvenience you have been put to."

"Indeed, I'll have a lovely story to tell; but the best part of it will be that I was rescued by you," she replied with a sly glance.

"I appreciate the honor that Fortune conferred on me in sending me to your aid."

"Dear me, you said that very nicely; but you mustn't forget that had those rascals proven too much for you you might have been killed or seriously hurt."

"In that case I would have died or suffered in a good cause." She repaid his gallant speech with an arch smile and they rode on to town without seeing any signs of the four half-drunken ruffians. On his way back Joe stopped at the superintendent's office of the Kohinoor mine and reported the outrage on the road, which he said had been perpetrated by men connected with that mine.

"Are you sure of that, Mr. Duncan?" asked the superintendent.

"Positive. One of them is Dan Crowley, who used to work at the D. & H. mine when I was first employed there myself. The other three are well-known about this region as hard characters. Their names are Halliday, Williams and Davis. You will recognize all four as miners in your employ about whom you have received many complaints."

"That's right," admitted the superintendent. "I've held on to them against my better judgment, chiefly because they are first-class miners, and because they manage to behave themselves within bounds. But this matter you complain about is altogether too serious to be allowed to pass, for it is probable that Mr. Stone will cause them to be arrested if I do not. I will telephone to the Carson police and have the matter attended to." Joe thanked him and went on his way to his own mine.

The four rascals did not show up at the Kohinoor mine till late that night, and then they found two officers waiting to arrest them and take them to Carson. Joe was notified by telephone to be present at their examination next morning in town. He put on his good clothes and presented himself at the magistrate's court at the hour specified. There he found Hattie and her father, and was warmly welcomed by both.

"It seems that I am under additional obligations to you, Joe," said the lawyer, pressing his hand gratefully. "I shudder to think what fur-

ther indignities my daughter might have suffered from those rascally miners but for your gallant interference in her behalf."

"Don't mention it, Mr. Stone. I am very glad that I happened to be at hand to rescue her. It enabled me to make her acquaintance at last, though in a rather informal and strenuous way."

"Hattie says that you——"

"Now, that will do," interposed Miss Stone with a rich flush. "I strongly object to you telling Mr. Duncan what I said to you about him. I said enough to him myself yesterday, before I knew who he was, to make me feel ashamed of myself for a month." Joe laughed at her confusion, and Mr. Stone chuckled himself.

At this point the prisoners were brought into court and Hattie was called to the witness chair to testify against them. Joe followed her, and his evidence clinched the charge against the rascals. They pleaded drunkenness in their own defense, but the magistrate did not think that a sufficient excuse, and he remanded them for trial.

After the case had been disposed of, Joe accepted an invitation to lunch with Hattie and her mother, and accompanied the young lady to her home while her father went back to his office. The young people met quite frequently after that, and as Joe was obliged to remain at the mine some time longer, Hattie often rode out to pay him what he called an informal visit, and Joe declared those meetings were the pleasantest he had ever enjoyed in his life.

## CHAPTER X.—The Discovery That Joe Made In the Wood.

Joe made it a practice to pay his men off on Monday afternoon instead of Saturday. The result of this practice was that many of the men who otherwise would have visited Carson on Saturday nights, deposited their surplus funds in the savings department created by the young coal baron for their benefit, and thus laid by a nest-egg for future contingencies.

Usually he went to the Carson National Bank and drew the money on Monday morning, or early in the afternoon, but one Saturday, about the close of July, finding that it would not be convenient for him to go to town on the following Monday, he drew the amount of the men's payroll that day and placed it in his office over Sunday, believing that it would be perfectly safe under the eye of the night watchman.

"Heard the news, Joe?"

Sunday morning as Joe was sitting in his office reading some coal mining statistics his telephone bell rang. Putting the receiver to his ear he asked who was at the other end of the wire. He found that it was Mr. Stone.

"No. What is it?"

"The four miners and a crook who was caught last week looting the Spencer House escaped from the jail this morning."

"Is that so? How did they manage it?"

"A hole was made through the brick wall between the cell in which the crook was confined and the large cell where the miners were laid in duress. A barred window in the big cell overlooked the yard. The bars were cut through as



neatly as if they were made of wood, which indicates that the crook had some fine steel saws on his person which were overlooked when he was searched. The five got out through the window, crossed the yard, scaled the fence, and dropped into an alley at the back of the jail, whence escape to the street was easy. The sheriff is out with a posse looking for the rascals, and it is hoped they may be nabbed before night."

"That is quite an exciting bit of news for Sunday," replied Joe.

"Rather an unusual experience for this town. You are coming over for dinner, of course. Hattie expects you."

"Yes, I'll be in town about three."

"All right. Good-by." Joe hung up the receiver and resumed his seat.

"That's a pretty clever crook to work his way out of an inner cell and then cut the heavy bars of the window," he mused, as he picked up his book of statistics again. "I wonder what the guard in the jail yard was doing that he didn't see the five men before they got over the wall? Maybe he was asleep at his post, or perhaps they caught him off his guard and laid him out."

Joe was sorry that the four rascally miners had got away, but he guessed he'd let the sheriff do the worrying. At half-past two he started for town, dressed in his best suit, and at a quarter past three was ringing the doorbell at the Stone residence. After dinner he and Hattie went out for a walk together and returned about tea time. He remained until ten o'clock and then started back for the mine.

In going to, and returning from, the town Joe was accustomed to take a bridle path through the wood where the old cabin stood in the clearing. It was a short cut and saved him about a mile. As it was a dark night and rather gloomy traveling through the wood at that hour and the young coal baron did not intend to take the bridle path on this occasion. The horse, however, took it of his own accord, and Joe, whose mind was forming air castles around Hattie Stone, did not notice where he was going till his animal trotted into the wood.

"Oh what's the difference?" said the boy. "I don't imagine there's anything in the wood that I need be afraid of. It won't take me ten minutes to pass through it." He patted his horse's neck and then began to think of Hattie once more. Suddenly, as he approached the clearing, a flash of a light attracted his attention.

"A light! Who's in the wood at this hour?" The circumstance seemed so unusual to him that he reined in his animal and looked in the direction of the light. He saw that it came from the window of the old cabin.

"That's strange," he muttered. "That old shack hasn't been occupied for years. I don't know of any tramps around this locality who would—by George!" he ejaculated as a thrilling idea struck him. "Maybe those five jailbirds who escaped this morning are hiding there for the time being. In case those rascals have taken up their quarters here for the night I'll telephone the jail about them as soon as I reach the mine." Joe lost no time in carrying out his resolution.

He dismounted, tied his horse to a tree, and entering the grass-covered clearing, made his

way over to the shanty. The door was closed, but the window through which the light shone was sashless and consequently open. Taking his position under it Joe heard voices inside, and it seemed to him as if he recognized the tones of Crowley and Halliday. He could only catch a word now and then, and as he wanted to make sure of the identity of the men before he tipped off the authorities, so as not to send officers on what might prove a fruitless errand, he looked around to see if he could find something which would enable him to climb up to the level of the window.

The only thing available for the purpose was a board which lay embedded in the soil near by. It looked as if it had been there a long time. Joe dug it out with his fingers and placed it at an angle against the building under the window. Then he shinned up its slanting side and cautiously peered over the ledge of the window into the room. In the center of the place stood the stump of a tree which was not there when Joe made his first and only visit to the cabin at the time he found the \$5,000 in the old trunk in the loft.

On the flat end of the stump stood a bottle with a lighted candle stuck in its neck and several ridges of tallow running down its black side. Gathered in a circle around the stump, eating sandwiches and pie from two paper bags and drinking from suspicious-looking pocket flasks, were the five rascals who escaped from the Carson Jail that morning.

"Now to talk business," the fifth man of the party, who Joe judged must be the crook, was saying, as he finished the last of his sandwich and took a swig from his private flask. "Are we still all of the same mind about raidin' the office of the Northwestern mine to-night?" Joe was so surprised by the man's words that he almost lost his hold on the window ledge, which would have meant an unceremonious tumble to the earth below.

"Yes, of course, we are, mate," replied Crowley, and the other miners nodded assent.

"Me jimmy was taken from me at the time I was pinched, but it's a cold day when a high tober like me can't make a small bar of iron do the business as well."

"How are yer goin' to get into the safe?" asked Crowley curiously.

"Easy enough. On the night before I tackled the job I was pinched as I slept in this here house, and under yonder fireplace I buried my bag of tools that I use when I tackle jobs of that sort. I guess it's there yet, for the bricks don't look as if they'd been disturbed."

"Good," ejaculated Halliday. "Just you whistle open that there safe and you'll find the men's week's pay there which the young coal baron drew yesterday from the Carson bank. I learned that much from Hoogeley, a friend of mine, who works at the mine."

"A week's pay, eh?" cried Williams, licking his lips. "That'll set us five up in good shape."

"How much do you think a week's pay at that mine foots up?" asked the crook.

"I dunno. How much do you think, Halliday?" said Williams.

"Not sich a big heap, for it's only a small mine. P'haps \$2,500."



"That would be \$500 a piece around," said the crook. "It ain't so bad, seein' that the job's easy."

"While you are crackin' the safe me and my pals'll be doin' a little job on our own hook," said Halliday with a grin.

"What kind of a job?" asked the crook.

"We owe that young coal baron a grudge all around for buttin' in when we was payin' attention to a gal we met along the road a while ago. That's what the four of us was pinched for, and his evidence was what got us held for trial, so we're goin' to get square with him as well as we kin."

"How are you goin' to do it?"

"We're goin' to blow the blamed buildin' up after you get the money from the safe."

"You are, eh? How are you goin' to do it?"

"Easy enough. Your bag of tools ain't the only thing that's buried in this cabin. We've got a bit of clock-work hid under a board here that's got more power in its insides than an ordinary stick of dynamite. We've had it for some time waitin' for a chance to put it to the best use we could think of. Well, as we've got to sneak out of the valley tonight before the sheriff gets on our track, we've concluded to use it to blow up the office buildin' of the Northwestern mine. We kin set the time explosion by the dial on the clock. By the time it goes off and wrecks the buildin' we ought to be miles away."

"As long as there ain't no danger of it's goin' off too quick I don't care what you do with the machine," replied the crook. "All I'm interested in, is, what I can get out of the mine. Then you can blow it to blazes for all of me."

"We'll do it all right," nodded Halliday.

"I guess I'll get me tools out from under them bricks," said the crook.

"And we'll take a look at that machine under the board," said Halliday. As the men rose to execute their purposes the board on which Joe was resting gave way with a crash and precipitated him to the ground.

## CHAPTER XI.—Joe Finds Himself in Trouble.

The noise under the window outside of course immediately attracted the attention of the five rascals, and their first feeling was one of alarm.

Halliday was the first to recover his self-possession. He made a dash for the door and reached the outer air in time to see Joe picking himself up from the ground. A quick look around assured him that only one intruder was on the scene, and he only a young chap, so shouting to his associates he jumped on the young coal baron and bore him back on the earth.

"Who have you got there—a spy?" asked the crook, who was the second person to appear, followed by the others.

"I dunno who he is," growled Halliday. "It's too dark to see his face."

"Yank him inside where the light is," said the other. "You can see he's been watchin' and listenin' at that winder from that there broken board." In the hands of such a big man as Halliday Joe could make no effective resistance, and he was dragged into the lighted room of the cabin.

"Joe Duncan!" exclaimed the four miners in one voice, almost as the light of the candle revealed the young coal baron's features to them.

"So you know him," ejaculated the crook. "Who is he?"

"He's the young boss of the Northwestern mine," said Halliday.

"The dickens he is!" cried the crook. "He must have heard——"

"I reckon he heard all we said about breakin' into his office," put in Crowley with a vindictive glance at their prisoner.

"What brought you to this house, Ducan?" asked Halliday savagely. "It ain't no time for the president of a coal mine to be nosin' around a lone wood more'n a mile from his own stampin' grounds."

"I was returning from town to the mine by the bridle path, and noticing a light in the window of this cabin I decided to see who was here, for the house is not occupied and consequently a light aroused my suspicions," replied Joe, who though loath to gratify the curiosity of his captors, felt that it would be wise for him not to cross them.

"I s'pose yer knew we had escaped from jail this mornin' and yer thought maybe it was us who was hidin' here from the officers. Is that it?" asked Crowley in an ugly tone.

"I won't deny it," replied Joe calmly.

"You was spyin' on us through that window," said Halliday fiercely. "You needn't try to deny it, for the broken board outside is evidence ag'in you."

"I'm not going to deny it."

"You admit it, then?"

"I do."

"How long were you at that winder?"

"Perhaps fifteen minutes."

"And you heard all we said?"

"During that time? Yes."

"You hear, mates. He heard everythin'."

"We hear," growled the others.

"What are we goin' to do about it?"

"Knock him on the head," suggested Williams. "We owe him a lay-out for what he's done to us."

"Tie him up and stow him in the loft," said Davis. "Then he won't be able to interfere with us, or send for the officers to nab us." The latter suggestion struck the bunch as about the right thing to act on. None of them was quite desperate enough to contemplate the commission of murder as a way out of the difficulty that confronted them.

"Is there any rope around this place to tie him with?" asked Halliday.

"You get a good hold on that young fellow so he can't give us the slip and I'll take the candle up into the loft and see what I kin find there," said Crowley.

"I'll see that he doesn't get away," said Halliday in a confident tone, pushing Joe back on the floor. "Sit on his legs, Williams; that'll hold him." Williams obeyed orders, and then Crowley took the light, went into the next room, leaving the rest of the party in the dark, and his feet were presently heard mounting the ladder.

He returned in a few minutes with a bunch of old rope he found in the loft. In five minutes Joe was tied hand and foot, but before that was done he was compelled to change his good clothes



for the crook's shabby ones. That left him as helpless as a calf on its way to market in a farmer's wagon.

"Now, then, Crowley, you and Williams can carry him up the ladder. As a further precaution you'd better tie him to a post upstairs," said Halliday, favoring Joe with a malicious grin. Ten minutes later the young coal baron was alone in the gloom of the loft, tied to one of the posts that supported the roof.

"This is a nice pickle I'm in," he said to himself. "If that board I was astride of hadn't been half rotten I wouldn't have got into this fix. Now it will be impossible for me to interfere with the plans of those rascals, and secure their rearrest. The robbery of the safe and the blowing up of the most important building at the mine is a pretty serious matter. It will be up to my night watchman to prevent these fellows accomplishing their project. I'm afraid they'll manage to put him out of business before they start operations. That will no doubt be the first thing they'll do, for they couldn't accomplish anything with him around."

In the meantime the rascals downstairs, satisfied that they had nothing to fear from the young coal baron, proceeded to get the safe-breaking tools and the infernal machine out of their hiding places. After making sure that the things were all right, they lit their pipes, put out the light, and sat down near the open door to figure out the final details of their project.

"If we git out of the valley all right where are we goin'?" asked Crowley. "It won't be safe for us to show our faces in Foxton, for the police I reckon are on the lookout for us there."

"We must keep to the mountains," replied Halliday.

"If we do that we're liable to starve," said Williams.

"Better to go hungry a while than be caught and sent back to jail with a new and heavy charge over our heads which will send us up for fifteen or twenty years," returned Halliday.

"We might chance goin' over to the D. & H. mine," said Crowley. "I know where the food is kept there. We kin find enough cooked and canned stuff to last us for a week. That'll carry us through the range all right, and then we'll be able to pick up what we need from farm-houses along our route."

"But we'll run against the watchman, and if he gives the alarm there'll be twenty or more of the miners on our heels in short order," said Halliday.

"The watchman doesn't nang around the eatin'-house. There's nothin' to steal there but food, and consequently the buildin' ain't much of a temptation to nobody but chaps like us who need eatables uncommonly bad. The only person we've got to look out for is Dobson, the cook. He sleeps in an addition to the kitchen. If he should wake up and catch us in his pantry we must give him a light tap on the block, just hard enough to keep him quiet for a while," said Crowley.

As the five men recognized the necessity of having food on their trip through the lonely and unsettled range, Crowley's plan was adopted as being the only feasible means of getting possession of it. The men continued to smoke and talk until they judged it was late enough for them

to get busy, then they left the cabin en route for the Northwestern mine.

## CHAPTER XII.—Joe Escapes Only to Get Into Fresh Difficulty.

Long before the five rascals left the cabin in the Clearing, Joe Duncan had made some vigorous efforts to release himself from his bonds. And not without success, for the ropes with which he was tied were old and somewhat rotten. Inside of half an hour he had released his hands.

"My jackknife will free me now in a couple of minutes," he muttered. "Probably I'd better go slow, however, for I can't get out of the building until after those scoundrels leave. If one of them should come up here to make sure I was secure and found I had got loose, the whole bunch would pile up and make it their business to see that I was tied up harder than ever. No, I must pretend to be as helpless as I was left, and then they won't suspect anything. Nothing like being foxy when the occasion demands it."

However, Joe went so far as to cut almost through every strand that held him, so that it would take but little effort to snap them apart when the time came. He could easily hear the men talking below, and as long as their voices came to his ears he knew they were still around. At length they were ready to start upon their enterprise, but before going Crowley lighted the candle and slipped up the ladder to take a final look at the young coal baron. Flashing the light over the boy he saw that he seemed to be in the same state as he and Williams had left him a couple of hours before.

"I reckon yer won't git loose in a hurry, young feller," he said, jeeringly. "If it wasn't that I don't care to put my head in danger of the noose I'd give yer a tap on your skull that would settle yer for keeps. I guess yer won't have the satisfaction of goin' on the stand and givin' evidence against us, as yer expected to do when we was brought to trial. We'll be a long way from these diggin's by the time yer git free from them ropes, but your life. You got the best of us when yer got hold of that land through yer friend the lawyer. That ground ought to belong to me and my mates by rights. If yer didn't know it before yer knows it now."

"How yer ever managed to git it is a mystery to us, but yer did and we can't help ourselves. That's the chief reason we are sore on yer, and the only way we kin git square without killin' yer is to blow your blamed old office buildin' up. That will give us some satisfaction, and the money you've got in yer safe will help us on our way out of this State. So, good-night to yer, Mr. Coal Baron," he concluded mockingly. "Pleasant dreams and a good night's rest. When yer year the explosion yer'll know we've done all the damage we kin to yer, and it's dead sorry we are that we can't hurt yer no more."

Thus speaking, Crowley, with a sardonic grin, turned his back on Joe, stepped down the ladder, and rejoined his companions who were waiting for him outside. The bunch then started for the mine. They had barely crossed the open space and plunged into the wood before the boy was free. In a twinkling he slipped down the ladder



and peered out at the doorway. No one was in sight. He did not deem it wise to follow the men on his horse, so he left the animal where he was tied to the tree and walked off in the direction he knew the rascals must have taken in order to reach the mine.

He did not go fast, as he did not want to overtake them in the wood. However, he saw nothing of them as he went along, and finally he reached the open ground. His idea was to slip around to the back of the office building, let himself in by the rear door, secure his revolver and then telephone to the Carson police. But on nearing the building, and putting his hand in his pocket for his bunch of keys, he woke up to the unpleasant recollection that the crook had his clothes on, while he was dressed in that individual's cast-off attire, and consequently the purpose he had in view was blocked.

"Now what shall I do? Hunt up the watchman? He's got a revolver, and I guess the pair of us will be able to put a spoke in the game of those rascals," he said. At that moment he saw the five scoundrels appear around the corner of the building. A light burned all night in the office, and Joe could see it shining through the window. The crook had evidently found the keys in his pocket, and had jumped to the conclusion that one of them fitted the lock of the front door, for he stepped up and tried the largest key in the keyhole.

It happened to be the right one, and in a jiffy he was inside the building. The four miners gathered around the corner of the office, and with a couple of shovels they had picked up began to make an excavation. Joe knew that their purpose was to plant the clock-work machine under the end of the building, and then set the mechanism so that the apparatus would explode at a certain hour and lay the building in ruins.

"They must have caught the watchman off his guard and gagged and bound him before I got here," thought Joe as he watched them. "I must try and find where they left him." Although the night was dark it required considerable caution on the boy's part to investigate the neighborhood of the office. The men themselves did not have to work wholly in the dark, as one of them had an electric light bull's-eye lamp—an oblong cylinder about six inches in length, furnished with a small dry battery and which cast an expanding light on the principle of the magic lantern.

Joe failed to find any trace of the night watchman and he wondered where he was. While Williams and Halliday worked away with the shovels and Davis held the light so that they could see what they were doing, Dan Crowley prowled around the place on the watch lest an unexpected intruder should appear to disarrange their plans. The young coal baron wasn't aware that Crowley was slouching about the vicinity and the result was he almost ran into his arms in the darkness.

"Hold on, there!" cried Crowley as Joe began to back away. "Stop and give an account of yourself. I'm the watchman." The ruse might have worked with anybody unfamiliar with the situation, but in the boy's case it was naturally a failure. Crowley saw that the intruder was a boy, but he did not for a moment suspect that

it was the young coal baron whom they had left tied in the loft of the cabin in the clearing. He supposed that it was some young miner out late returning to his cottage, half a mile away.

He did not want the young fellow to catch sight of his comrades at their work, for it was to be expected that in that case he would take to his heels and give an alarm. Crowley wanted to get close enough to him so he could grab him and put him out of business for the time being. As the rascal advanced, Joe retreated, intending to dart behind the breaker-house and get away. Crowley, finding the intruder was not to be cajoled into stopping, made a sudden dash for him.

Joe, afraid that he couldn't reach the breaker-house, dashed toward a line of partially loaded coal-cars drawn up on the track near the office. Crowley proved to be a fast runner and was right on the boy's heels when he reached the last car. Joe vaulted into the car like a monkey. The rascal sprang after him and reached out to grab him.

"Don't yer try to git away," cried Crowley. "'Cause if yer do I'll smash yer head with a lump of coal. Own up that yer come here to spy on us."

"Stand back!" cried Joe Duncan. "Don't you touch me." Crowley started back at the sound of his voice.

"What!" he roared furiously. "So it's you, Joe Duncan, is it? How in thunder did yer git free?" Joe's answer was to pick up a lump of coal and dash it into his face. With a cry of pain and rage Crowley tumbled off the car to the ground.

### CHAPTER XIII.—On the Trail of the Stolen Money-Box

The other three miners had naturally been attracted to Crowley chasing Joe. Halliday left the bunch and started to assist his companion capture the intruder. Before he reached the coal-car Crowley came tumbling down backward, his face covered with blood from the wound made by the sharp piece of coal. Halliday started to mount the car, but was met by a shower of coal that caused him to fall back in confusion. At that exciting moment the crook came out of the office with the money-box in his hands.

"What's the trouble?" he asked Williams and Davis, who had paused in their work to watch the efforts of Halliday and Crowley catch the unexpected comer on the scene. Williams explained the situation as Davis flashed the electric light rays on the rear coal-car just in time for them to see Joe spring from the car to the ground behind it. Halliday rushed around the end of the car, but could see no trace of the boy. Calling the others to help him hunt around Halliday started to look for the young coal baron.

The search amounted to nothing, although Joe was but a short distance away working around toward the office. As soon as the boy got the string of cars between himself and the rascals he rushed over to the building. He made a hurried examination of the spot where the men had been digging and found the clock-work bomb lying about a yard away in readiness to be placed in position. He carried it to the rear



corner, where a large barrel nearly full of rain water stood under a tin pipe that led down from the gutter above and dropped it into the water, when it immediately sank to the bottom.

"There'll be no explosion around this place to-night," he said to himself. He made his way back to the front of the building, but saw no signs of the men. He took advantage of his chance to dart into the office, expecting to find the crook at work on the safe, and intending to make things lively for him. He found to his dismay, that the rascal had accomplished his work and was gone. The door of the safe was blown open and the box containing the men's pay was missing.

"That crook is a slick one, and he worked pretty lively. I did not expect he would be half through yet. The only thing I can do now is to telephone the Carson Police," thought the boy. This he did in a very few minutes, without dwelling on any unnecessary explanations. Then rushing into his private office he secured his revolver from a drawer in his desk and strapped it around his waist.

His purpose was to follow the rascals, if possible, and try and recover his stolen cash-box. He did not intend that they should get clear off if he could help it. While he was thus engaged the five scoundrels had come together after their ineffectual search for the boy and held a hurried consultation.

"I've got the cash," said the crook. "We'd better make tracks at once for the D. & H. mine, get the provisions we need and make for the mountains."

"That means we've got to abandon our plan of blowin' up the office buildin'," said Halliday with evident reluctance.

"You can't do that now since we've been discovered. We'll probably have a crowd of miners huntin' for us pretty soon. We can't skip away too quick if we mean to save our skins," said the crook impatiently. The wisdom of his advice was apparent, and the miners, much against their wills, started under the lead of Crowley for the D. & H. property.

"I can't see how he got free so soon from the house in the wood," said Williams. "Me and Crowley tied him as tight as we could. We meant he should stay there till somebody found him and let him go."

"Maybe somebody came that way right after we left and released him," said Davis.

"How would any one walkin' past that old cabin know there was anybody in the loft?"

"How should I know unless he happened to yell out and attracted their attention?"

"That's not likely," said Halliday. "The only reasonable supposition is that he managed to work loose himself. I guess you chaps didn't tie him as snug as you think you did. However, there ain't no use arguin' about it. He got loose somehow, and reached the buildin' in time to queer us."

"He didn't queer me," chuckled the crook. "I got into that safe as slick as if it was a piece of cheese, and I got the money-box, which is better than blowin' the old buildin' up. Gettin' satisfaction is all right in its way, but gettin' the cash is a heap better to my way of thinkin'."

"You're about as smart in your line as they come," said Halliday, in a tone of admiration.

"I can hold my own, all right, with the best of 'em," replied the crook complacently.

Joe, while bound in the loft cabin, had heard the rascals lay their plans about going to the D. & H. mine after provisions, and then making their escape east through the Shoshone range. So, as soon as he was ready to follow them, he was at no loss what direction to take. He had given the police the same tip over the wire, and urged them to rush several officers out to the D. & H. mine without delay.

Thus he confidently expected to round the rascals up at that point before they could get to the mountains. The D. & H. mine was on the other side of the valley, about a mile and a quarter from the Northwestern mine. The rascals, knowing that time was precious with them, made haste to reach the small building where the provisions were kept, which was an addition to the eating-house where Joe had worked when he first came to the valley.

As soon as they reached the place Crowley pointed the building out. There was no door to it from the outside, entrance being had through the main structure, but there was a window and it was a very simple matter for the expert crook to force it. As he was the smallest and lightest of the party, Halliday boosted him through the window, and with the aid of the electric lamp he was soon passing such provisions as were available to his friends on the outside. The crook worked so expeditiously that it didn't take him more than five minutes to toss as much stuff out of the window as he thought they could conveniently carry.

Then he worked himself through the window without any assistance from his pals, stowed his share of the provisions about his person, picked up the stolen cash-box, and was ready to follow the four miners into the mountains. They had been gone not much over five minutes when Joe came cautiously up to the familiar old building where he had worked during his first half-year in the valley. There was no sign of the rascals, but the open window of the provision-room led the boy to suspect that the scoundrels had been there, secured what they wanted and were now making for the mountain range, in the foothills of which the mine was situated. He went to the kitchen door and banged at it in such a lusty fashion as to bring Dobson to the door in scanty apparel in very short order.

"What's the trouble?" asked the cook, looking at Joe without recognizing him, owing to the darkness and the rough clothes the lad had on.

"Don't you know me, Dobson? I'm Joe Duncan."

"Joe Duncan!" ejaculated the cook, much astonished. "Why, you don't look a bit like Joe, and yet your voice is Joe's voice. Come in. What brings you over here at this early hour in the morning, and in such a rough rig?"

"I'm after five rascals who escaped from the Carson jail this morning."

"Why should you be after them, Joe? Isn't that the business of the police?"

"Yes; but I'm particularly interested in their capture for more than one reason. The most important is that one of them, an unusually clever crook, got into my office tonight, cracked my safe and got away with over \$2,000 in money."

"You don't say!" cried Dobson.



"The rascals are on their way to the mountains now, and I have reason to believe that they broke into your provision room and stole a quantity of your stuff. I wish you'd get a light and investigate. I expect some of my miners here in a few minutes to join me in the chase, and I telephoned the Carson police to send some officers here. Altogether I look for lively times in the range before sunrise."

Dobson pulled on his trousers, lighted a lamp and, accompanied by Joe, went to the provision room. It only needed a glance to show that it had been pretty well despoiled, and the cook uttered a howl of wrath.

"The rascals!" he exclaimed. "They broke in through that window, and I was so sound asleep that I did not hear them. The superintendent will blame me for this. He will say I ought to have heard them and frightened them away with my revolver."

"Well, the damage is done, so there is no use of squealing now. I must go outside and wait for my men to come," said the young coal baron.

As Joe stepped into the open half a dozen tough-looking miners came hurrying toward the eating house. The boy recognized them at once as the men belonging to his mine, and the ones he was expecting. There was no sign yet of the police.

"They ought to be here by this time," he said. "It is more than half an hour since I telephoned the jail, and the man who answered my call promised to send three or four officers here at once in a light wagon. Well, I can't wait for them. Those rascals are hustling for the range, and we must catch them before they can find shelter in some ravine or gorge."

At that moment Dobson came to the door.

"Tell the police that I and half a dozen of my miners have made straight for the Diablo Pass, which is the nearest point to enter the heart of the range," said Joe to the cook. "Tell them to leave their wagon here and follow us on foot without delay. Understand?"

"Yes," nodded Dobson, whose face was as long as a pikestaff over the loss of his provisions.

The young coal baron then placed himself at the head of his determined little squad of followers and they started off at a rapid gait for Diablo Pass.

#### CHAPTER XIV.—In the Grasp of the Mountain Torrent.

The night was so dark that but for the fact that Joe was satisfied the rascals were aiming for the Diablo Pass he would have felt that to catch them with the lead they had was something like hunting for a needle in a haystack.

Whether he and his men would be able to head them off was a serious problem, as the crook and four miners would no doubt hustle for all they were worth, since their only chance to escape capture lay in their ability to lose themselves in the trackless wilds before their pursuers were able to get on their track.

Joe's bunch were only armed with pick handles, but these were formidable enough in the hands of strong, determined men, particularly as it was not probable that the fleeing rascals had any

weapons at all. The young coal baron felt that his revolver would intimidate the scoundrels if he could bring it to bear on them. He and his men started on a jog-trot, and as the country grew more open after leaving the D. & H. mine behind they spread out, and kept their eyes wide open.

It was the darkest hour before dawn when they reached the pass without having seen anything of their quarry. Here Joe called a halt for a brief rest. He was disappointed that they had failed to cut the rascals off, and he foresaw that from this point their work would be more difficult, for there were many places along the pass where the pursued could diverge and leave their pursuers in the lurch. With instructions to examine every ravine off the pass Joe ordered his men forward again.

In the darkness and obstructions of the pass they gradually became separated, and at last Joe found himself alone. He did not mind that, as he arranged a signal for bringing them together when the men they were after were discovered. The sky soon began to lighten up in the east, showing that day was breaking. This fact was gladly welcomed by the young coal baron, and he felt he and his men would be able to push their investigations with surer effect. The pass presented many difficulties to a rapid advance, but Joe persevered, believing the rascals to be ahead of him.

Morning grew apace and the sun rose. Now the extreme wildness and loneliness of the range became apparent to the plucky boy. Apparently he had left all traces of civilization behind him. No sound broke the stillness of the pass but that made by his progress through the brush and over the stones. At length, however, the noise of a distant waterfall struck upon his ears. It was some distance up the pass, and grew more distinct as the boy went on.

Joe soon reached a point where a wide ravine diverged from the track he was following and he stopped to consider whether he had better keep straight on or tackle the ravine. While he was deliberating his sharp eye noticed the tracks of many boot prints in the earth and grass at the mouth of the ravine and they all pointed in that direction.

"I'll bet those rascals have gone up the ravine," he said.

Satisfied in his own mind that the scoundrels had gone in that direction he began to follow the ravine. For an hour he pursued his way without any further developments, and he was beginning to grow impatient when the ravine suddenly ended in an open space resembling a small amphitheater. The mountains rose high all around him in crags and peaks, and the sound of the water, which had been growing louder as he advanced, burst upon his ears in a subdued roar.

He couldn't see any sign of it as yet, but he knew it must be near at hand. Turning a spur of rock he came in sight of it, dashing down the mountain side from an enormous height, and forming a rushing torrent which ran across the floor of the amphitheater and disappeared into a dark cavernous hole in the opposite side. His further progress in that direction seemed to be cut off.

"If these men came this way where could they have gone?" he asked himself.

The bushes were high and numerous around the



sides of the place, and there were many spots where the rascals could have hidden themselves if they wanted to, but Joe did not imagine that they would pause in their flight to do that unless they saw pursuers approaching. Suddenly he received a blow on the back of the head that sent him dazed to the ground. When his thoughts began to shape themselves again he found himself held held down by the powerful arms of Dan Crowley, whose ugly, scarred face was peering down into his own, while around them stood the other four he had been tracking.

"So yer've been follerin' us, have yer?" said the miner. "Well, now yer've found us what are yer goin' to do about it?" the rascal added with a malicious grin.

Halliday stopped and yanked the revolver from Joe's belt.

"This is just what we want," chuckled the ruffianly miner. "Now we kin defend ourselves in case any of the sheriff's men come across us."

"Jest hand me that gun and I'll use one of them bullets on this here young coal baron. I'll wager he won't foller us no more after I git through with him."

"No," objected Halliday, "that won't do at all."

"Why not?" snarled Crowley. "I've sworn to kill him if I ever caught him. He marked me for life last night with that lump of coal. Look at my face. I won't be satisfied till I finish him," and he spoke the words like a man who meant business.

"I'll tell you why not, you thick-headed idiot," replied Halliday. "You don't suppose he's such a fool as to follow us alone, do you? There are others not a great way off, and the crack of this revolver would bring them right to this spot. Then we'd have to fight to git away, with the gallows afore every man that was caught. If you want to risk your life that's your business, but blame me if I'm goin' to furnish evidence that'll send me to the rope."

"That's right," put in Williams. "If he's found dead here we'll be held for the crime if caught, and I ain't in favor of takin' no chances. Things are bad enough as they stand. This here robbery we're implicated in is good for ten years all around in case we're pinched. I don't want to face nothin' worse."

"Blame you for a pack of cowards!" growled Crowley. "If we don't put him out of the way what'll we do with him? He's got us spotted now. How are you goin' to git away with him to gain the point?"

"Tie him and leave him here," said Davis.

"What'll we tie him with? And didn't he slip out of the ropes last night when we tied him as fast as we could? He's too slick for us in that way, let me tell you."

"Give him a crack on the head with a stone and toss him into the bushes. He won't come to for an hour or two, and then we'll be out of the way," said Davis.

"Well, hand me that stone yonder and I'll leave my mark on him," said Crowley in an ugly tone.

The others objected to Crowley doing the deed, for they believed he'd finish the boy while he was about it, as his mind was murderously inclined toward the young coal baron. The crook in particular did not want to be mixed up in any blood spilling, as he had a wholesome respect for the law as dispensed in capital offenses. Crowley was furious at the opposition he encountered from

his associates. Had he been alone, and Joe at his mercy, the boy's chance for his life would have been small indeed. During the argument Joe lay quite still in the grasp of the man he had made a relentless enemy of. He saw that he hadn't the ghost of a chance to escape, and he wondered what the outcome of it all was going to be. He saw that the other rascals were not protecting him because they had any sympathy for him, but because they feared the consequences that his murder was likely to bring upon them.

As matters stood it was clear they must get rid of him somehow, and the problem they faced was the method to be used. They couldn't bind him a prisoner because they had nothing they could use for that purpose. While they were figuring the matter out, Crowley's wicked eyes were roving around the amphitheater as if in search of the means of accomplishing his purpose in spite of the objections of his companions. Suddenly his eyes lighted on the stream and the hole through which it was rushing like a sluice. Springing to his feet and yanking the boy with him, as if he were a mere child, he seized Joe in his arms as he might a sack of soft goods, and rushed toward the stream.

"Hold on there, what are you goin' to do?" roared Halliday, springing after him.

Crowley's answer was a snort of triumph. Raising the boy aloft, he flung him into the dashing torrent. There was a splash as the water closed over Joe's head. Then his body reappeared yards away, in a mass of yeasty foam. As the other men rushed to the edge of the stream the young coal baron, unable to help himself, was borne straight at the black hole in the mountain side and in less time than it has taken us to narrate the fact he disappeared into the yawning crevice and was gone, presumably forever.

## CHAPTER XV.—In Which Crowley Turns a Trick on His Companions.

"Well, you've done it now for fair," said Halliday, wiping the perspiration from his brow. "You've committed murder in spite of us, Dan Crowley, and the sin of it is on your own soul, not on ours."

"Yah! You soft-livered curs!" snarled Crowley. "I've fixed the cub for keeps and saved our bacon. Yer ought to be obliged to me instead of kickin' like a lot of ornery steers. It ain't yer funeral, anyway, so shut up. He's gone for good and there hain't no evidence to show what happened to him. I'm safe enough, unless," fiercely, "you chaps should turn ag'in me and swear I done him up. Even then nothin' could be proved ag'in me. The body would have to be found to prove that he wasn't livin'. We're well rid of him, so now let's open that there money-box with a stone and divvy up. We may git separated afore long, and I want my share, d'ye hear?"

"We can't wait here to do that," said Halliday. "I'm dead sure that Duncan didn't come this way alone. I'm lookin' to see some of his men appear any moment. We must skip out of this at once. What dy'e say, mates?"

The others were in favor of postponing the division of the money till later on, and resuming their flight further into the mountains, and they



said so. Crowley put up a big kick on finding that he was in the lone minority, but it did him no good, and he was obliged to give in. The five rascals then resumed their way into the heart of the range through a long narrow ravine not far from the waterfall. As they were filing into the place a dark object crawled slowly out of the hole through the lower part of which the water was rushing in. This drenched object was Joe Duncan, whose underground flight had been arrested a short distance from the opening by a rocky ledge, where a whirlpool had sucked him out of the main stream. He climbed out of the water upon the rocks and found that the ledge continued up to the opening. He followed it and reached the hole just in time to see the last of his enemies enter the narrow ravine.

"Gee! I had a mighty narrow shave for my life that time. Crowley is a murderous villain, and I'll fix him when the law gets it clutches on him. I must follow those rascals without delay. It's too bad I've lost my revolver, but that can't be helped. I was taken off my guard, or else there would have been a lively time in this place. I must be more cautious hereafter. I suppose they think I'm dead. So much the better. I'll bring them to justice or know the reason why not."

Joe took his dripping clothes off and wrung the water out of them, then putting them on again and picking up his hat, which lay on the ground where he was overpowered, he started up the narrow ravine after the rascals. The ravine ended in a rude mountain path, and he followed this. It led up among the rocks and crags of the range. Joe found it hard work to follow the trail of the rascals, but he stuck to his work with his bull dog tenacity. As morning advanced he grew both tired and hungry. He grew discouraged, too, as he failed to sight the scoundrels. Finally he reached a small, gloomy-looking cave and sat down in front of it to rest. He had been there perhaps ten minutes when he heard the voices of men coming that way. The voices were rough, and they seemed familiar to his ear.

"I believe those villains are coming up the path now. I missed them somehow on the way. Probably they stopped somewhere to rest. They mustn't see me. I'll hide in here."

Accordingly he drew back into the cave. He was right in his conjecture that the approaching men were the fellows he was tracking. They came up to the mouth of the cave and stopped.

"This is a good place for us to hide while we take a sleep," Halliday said. "I'm about fagged out. After a good rest and something to eat we'll make better time. I guess there's little chance of our being caught now. No one will ever track us here."

The five entered the cave, and Joe retired further back.

"What's the matter with breakin' open that cash-box and dividin' now?" asked Crowley.

"We'll do it before we leave," said Halliday.

That appeared to satisfy the rascal, for he said no more on the subject. All hands drew out their pipes, took a short smoke, conversing about their future movements, and then with one accord stretched themselves out on the floor of the cave, and in a few minutes appeared to be sound asleep. Joe's eyes lighted up with satisfaction. Here was an unexpected chance for him to recover his money. As for the rascals themselves, he'd have

to let them go, as it wasn't possible for him single-handed to capture them. The most important thing was to regain his cash-box with the \$2,000 which had not as yet been tampered with. The men themselves would probably be captured later on, for without money they would be in a bad way. Joe waited for some time before making a move.

He wanted to give the men time enough to sink into a deep sleep, for he knew they must be very tired. At length he left his dark corner and started to crawl toward the scoundrels. The tin cash-box lay beside the crook and that was Joe's objective point. Before he had advanced more than a yard he was startled to see one of the men start up. He stopped with a gasp of astonishment and remained silent and motionless. He expected the fellow to lie down again, but he didn't. On the contrary, he got slowly on his knees and after looking intently at his companions he reached over the body of the crook and grabbed the cash-box. This movement on his part rather surprised Joe. The light from the opening glinting on the fellow's unhandsome and bandaged face disclosed him to be Dan Crowley.

"What the dickens is he up to?" breathed the young coal baron, watching the man closely.

Crowley also grabbed up two packages of food, and then walked out of the cave. Joe waited a few minutes, thinking he might return; but he didn't. Then the boy crawled to the opening and looked cautiously out. There was Crowley walking up the path with the packages in his arms, and the box in one hand. His purpose was now quite clear. Crowley intended to shake his associates, and make off with the whole of the plunder.

"Well, upon my word," ejaculated Joe, "he's a peach of a villain. Talk about honor among thieves. The word isn't in his vocabulary. I must follow him now, and lay him out. I wish I had my revolver. It would come in mighty handy against that scoundrel."

The wish was father to the thought that he might be able to regain it from the sleeping Halliday, who had taken it from him. So he re-entered the cave and approached that ruffian with due caution. The butt of the weapon stuck out of Halliday's pocket, and that fortunately was turned uppermost as he lay on his other side. Joe knelt down and began drawing it out of his pocket, a little at a time so as not to arouse the man. The ruffian slept too heavily to be disturbed by the boy's cautious movements, and so Joe soon had the revolver in his hand again. The pangs of an unsatisfied appetite induced the young coal baron to appropriate one of the packages of food that lay beside Halliday. Then he got out of the cave as soon as he could and started after Crowley, who by this time had disappeared among the bushes above.

Opening the package, Joe found a supply of cold meat and bread and half a pie. The provender looked mighty good to him in his hungry condition, so he lost no time pitching into it as he walked along. He ate half the contents of the package and put the balance in his pocket. Only one thing more he yearned for, and that was a drink of cold water. This he got after going a quarter of a mile, where he discovered a rill of water flowing down the rocks. Drinking as much as he wanted, he resumed his chase of Crowley with renewed vigor, feeling confident that he was bound to come up with the scoundrel before long.



## CHAPTER XVI.—The Finish of Mr. Crowley.

The sun was now past mid-heaven, and Joe realized that it was early afternoon. He wondered where his six miners were from whom he had got separated in the darkness of early morning. Hunger and the unfruitful result of the pursuit had probably caused them to go back the way they had come. He couldn't blame them. No doubt they expected to meet him at the D. & H. mine, or learn that he had passed that place on his way back to the Northwestern property. As for the officers, he guessed they wouldn't venture far into the range unprovided with food supplies. If they had provided themselves with rations before starting out, in expectation of remaining two or three days in the mountains, then it was not improbable they might be following some blind track in the range at that moment. In any case Joe did not count on them.

In fact, as he had only one man to figure on now he felt able to handle the situation without any outside assistance. What course the other four rascals would follow when they discovered that Crowley had proved recreant and was off on his own hook with the plunder he could not foresee. He did not doubt but they would be as mad as a swarm of disturbed hornets, and that they would endeavor to overtake the traitor. Therefore it would be necessary for him to bring matters to an issue with Crowley before the others came along and chipped in. To accomplish this, however, he would have to catch Crowley first. But Joe found that he had quite a contract on his hands. The path up the mountain was soon lost in a maze of underbrush and rank grass. It soon dawned on Joe that Crowley might have taken any one of a dozen directions soon after leaving the cave.

There was absolutely nothing to guide the young coal baron. The pursuit became simply a matter of luck, with the chances against him. The further he went into the range with only one meal of provisions in his pocket the more precarious his chances of success became. This fact did not seriously impress the boy until he had gone many miles through the dreary waste where nothing was to be seen but Nature in her most desolate aspect. The lack of any clue to Crowley's whereabouts, coupled with the slowly sinking sun, caused Joe to come to a stop at length and consider how much farther it was prudent for him to venture.

He recognized that there was a fair possibility of his getting lost in the wilds, and this wasn't a pleasant reflection. To pass even an August night in the range was not an enviable matter. He hated to relinquish the pursuit after going so far and reducing the opposition to one man; but that one man seemed to be a tougher proposition than the whole five had been together, so far as finding him was concerned.

"No use talking," muttered Joe, "I don't like the look of things. I dare not go on much further. Better lose \$2,000 than risk my life in the wilds. I don't mind tackling danger in the ordinary way, but there is a limit to everything, and I guess I've about reached the limit in this chase."

With a last look in the direction he expected

Crowley was pursuing he turned around and began to retrace his steps. He walked slowly and with no enthusiasm, for to acknowledge himself beaten was a sore point with the young coal baron. He found as he proceeded that he was not following the same course by which he had come, but it was as near as he could make it. He found himself in a ravine he had not traversed before, but as it seemed to run in the right direction he did not refuse to take it. It brought him out on a plateau covered with grass that looked brown and somewhat parched from lack of water. By this time the sun was out of sight on the other side of the range.

"I won't get out of the mountains tonight, that's certain," said the boy, as he walked leisurely forward, "so there is no use hurrying. But I guess I can sleep anywhere after being up all night. If I can run across a stream of water I'll sit down and eat my supper, such as it is. Then I'll turn in at the most available place I can find."

It was growing dark when he came to a shallow brook and there he stopped and made a meal of the remainder of his provisions.

"I guess I might as well sleep here as anywhere—hello! There's a light yonder, or my eyes deceive me."

There wasn't any doubt about it being a light. It was stationary, and appeared to come from the window of a house.

"I wonder who lives up in this lonesome spot?" he asked himself. "I guess I'll investigate. Perhaps I can get a night's lodging of some kind. Any old roof is better than none at all."

So Joe took up his line of march for the light. It was as dark as it was likely to be when the boy made out the outlines of a one-story shack against the background of the sky. As he approached the door it struck him that before he made his presence known to the inmate it would be wise to look in through the window and see what the inmate looked like. Joe forgot that he looked pretty trampish himself, and hardly a likely-looking object to be taken advantage of by anyone that way inclined. Walking up to the window through which shone the light he looked in. Joe uttered an exclamation at what he saw. Two men were eating supper at a table in the centre of the room, and one of them was Dan Crowley. The boy looked for the box, which was uppermost in his thoughts, and saw it reposing on a stool, partly covered by the rascal's hat.

"It is fortunate that I didn't knock at the door before I made this discovery. Look before you leap is a wise old saying, and if people followed it oftener they would avoid a whole lot of trouble. Now I wonder if Crowley has arranged to stay here all night, or if he merely stopped for an hour or so?"

Joe watched the two men at the table till they finished the meal, got out their pipes and began to smoke on very friendly terms. The boy could hear the murmur of their voices, but nothing more. Presently he heard the voices of several men approaching the front of the house. He peered around the corner to see who the newcomers were. There were four of them and the darkness did not prevent him from identifying them as the crook and the three miners Crowley had abandoned.

"Great Scott! There'll be something doing as



soon as they find Crowley inside. I'll bet he'll be roughly handled."

Joe rushed back to the window to see what would happen just as Halliday knocked on the door. As the tenant of the shack started for the door Crowley jumped to his feet, seized his hat and the cash-box and vanished into an adjoining room.

"Say, stranger, we're lookin' for a square-built chap, with a bandaged face, dressed in miner outfit, and carryin' a tin money-box. Seen such a feller this afternoon up in these diggin's?"

To Joe's surprise the occupant of the shack denied having seen such a party, though the description fitted his guest perfectly.

"Haven't seen him, eh?" said Halliday in some disappointment. "Well, kin me and my friends bunk on the floor here to-night?"

The inmate replied that as he wasn't keeping a hotel he couldn't consent to such an arrangement.

"Well, I reckon we'll stay whether it suits you or not. Come in, mates, and make yourselves at home."

The bunch forced their way into the place and shut the door. The occupant protested, but his objection went for nothing. There were four against him and the odds were not to be resisted.

"Been havin' supper, eh?" said Halliday. "We'll just as soon help you to eat a bit more as not. Just make a fresh pot of coffee, and trot out whatever else you've got in the house. We're savin' our fodder to see us through the range."

He threw down his hat and seated himself on a stool, an example followed by his three associates.

"Where do you come from?" asked the inmate ungraciously.

"Don't worry about where we come from. Just move lively and git that coffee under way," replied Halliday gruffly. "Who's been eatin' with you, old man? I don't see him around."

"That's my son. He just went out to round up his hoss," replied the inmate.

Halliday's sharp eyes lighted on a paper bundle lying on the table. It looked like the bundle he and his pals had.

"Does that bundle belong to your son?" he asked suspiciously.

The inmate nodded.

"Well, I'll take the liberty of openin' it."

He did so, and a bunch of food was exposed. Halliday sprang to his feet in some excitement.

"Mates, this here is Crowley's bundle," he cried. "He must be somewhere about. Look into the next room, Williams, while you two," indicating Davis and the crook, "go outside and look around. This chap's been lyin' to us. Crowley and the tin box is not far off, and we're goin' to catch him if we have to pull the shack down in order to find him."

Joe decided that it was high time to vacate his position at the window. He must draw off till Davis and the crook returned to the house.

"Crowley is in for it good and hard," he breathed as he slipped away into the gloom.

Reaching a boulder he crouched behind it. As he looked back toward the shack he saw a dark object hurriedly approaching. He made up his mind that it must be Crowley, who had managed to escape from the house, and was fleeing from

trouble. It was that rascal, and when he came to the boulder he paused to look back. Mechanically he rested the cash-box he was carrying on the stone. Joe saw his opportunity. He rose up, revolver in hand, and seizing the box snatched it from the ruffian. Crowley turned with a startled exclamation on his lips. Joe stepped back and covered him with his weapon.

"The game is up, Crowley," he said.

At that moment the moon began rising above the distant hills and its brightening light threw a pale gleam upon the young coal baron's face. Crowley stood transfixed—not by the revolver, glinting in the moonbeams, but by the face of one the scoundred thought dead, murdered by him.

"Joe Duncan!" he gurgled with dropping jaw. "Back, back! Don't look at me in that way. Have yer come here to haunt me? I didn't kill yer. I didn't, I say! Have mercy!"

He swayed a moment in the air, with bloodshot, staring eyes, and then with a hoarse scream of fear fell forward across the stone and lay as motionless as one dead.

## CHAPTER XVII.—Conclusion.

Although Joe didn't know it, the shock of seeing the supposed ghost of his victim, reacting on a heart weakened by drink and other excesses, had practically killed Dan Crowley. He lay breathing out his life in short gasps across the boulder, while the boy hurried away into the gloom with the cash-box. Crowley's cry had been heard by Davis and the crook, and they hurried over to the boulder, where they were astonished to see the condition their late comrade was in. Picking him up they carried him into the shack and laid him on the floor.

"Did you lay him out?" asked Halliday, looking at the dying man.

"No," replied Davis. "That's the shape we found him in."

"Where's the cash-box?"

"Dunno. Didn't think about it."

"Then take a light and go back where you found him and hunt for it, d'ye hear?"

The shack dweller furnished a lantern, rather reluctantly, and the two rascals returned to the boulder, where they searched in vain for the cash-box. When they got back and reported their non-success Crowley was dead.

"Do you know anythin' about that box?" roared Halliday in a threatening way to the man of the house.

That individual hastened to deny any knowledge of the article. Halliday, however, didn't believe him, and swore he'd pull the house down if the man didn't produce the box at once. Of course he couldn't produce what he didn't have, and trouble seemed imminent.

"Tie him to that chair and we'll see if we can't get the truth out of him," ejaculated Halliday.

As Williams and Davis grabbed the unfortunate shack dweller the door was thrown open and in walked Joe Duncan, revolver in one hand and cash-box in the other, followed by four members of the Carson police whom he had run against as he was hurrying away from the plateau. They were camped in a nook in the range, where they



had just finished a frugal meal and expected to pass the night there. The young coal baron quickly explained the situation to them and then led them to the shack.

"Hands up, all of you!" cried Joe, covering Halliday with his weapon, while the officers pointed their revolvers at the others.

The rascals saw that they were fairly cornered, and submitted without a struggle to be handcuffed. Joe was astonished to find Crowley dead on the floor, and he naturally concluded that the prisoners had killed him out of revenge for his conduct. An investigation showed that Crowley had been brought to the shack in a dying condition. When Joe learned that the rascal had been found in that state lying across the rock he came to the conclusion that Crowley had been killed by the shock of seeing what he took to be the ghost of his supposed victim. It was decided to remain at the house till daylight, and Joe promised to pay the man liberally for providing the party with breakfast and the use of his rooms for the night.

Joe had the crook brought into the inner room, where he was compelled to yield up the clothes he had taken from the young coal baron on the preceding night at the cabin in the clearing of the wood. Although the garments had suffered greatly while the crook was in possession of them, Joe was glad to get them back, and get rid of the rascal's seedy apparel. Next morning all hands were awake at dawn. While the dweller of the shack was preparing breakfast for the bunch the four officers carried Crowley's body to a convenient spot and buried it, with no other covering than a couple of gunny sacks. After breakfast Joe, the officers and the prisoners started down the mountain for Diablo Pass, which they reached about noon. Then it was an easy matter for them to reach the D. & H. mine, where the policemen had left their wagon. The party dined at the mine, after which the prisoners were loaded on the wagon and driven to Carson, Joe returning to his own quarters at the Northwestern mine. Although Joe had recovered his cash-box, the police took possession of it as evidence to be used against the prisoners at their trial, so the Northwestern miners had to wait for their wages till the young coal baron went to town on Wednesday and drew a duplicate amount to pay them off.

Halliday, Williams, Davis and the crook were tried in due time, convicted and sent away for ten years each, and that wound up their career as far as Joe Duncan was concerned. Joe's chase of the rascals who had broken into his office and got away with his cash-box was published in the semi-

weekly Carson "News," and his plucky conduct in following the bunch after he had nearly been murdered by Crowley greatly enhanced his already fine reputation. During the year that followed the Northwestern mine was largely developed by its young president, and fat dividends were paid to the lucky holders of its stock. As Joe owned more than half the stock his income was naturally quite large. When Hattie graduated from her seminary and came home for good, Joe, who had corresponded with her regularly, asked her to marry him.

She said "Yes," and referred the young coal baron to her father and mother. He had no difficulty in that direction, for it had long been the wish of Hattie's parents that the young people should make a match of it. Lawyer Stone recognized the fact that Joe Duncan was an unusually smart boy. As he was a lucky one also, and the head of a prosperous coal mining company, naturally he was a very desirable son-in-law. All these events happened many years ago, and the Northwestern mine is still one of the best producers, considering its size, in the great Northwest. Joe is a wealthy man, being easily worth a couple of millions. He and his wife live in the finest residence in Carson, and have a fine family of boys and girls growing up around them. He has never forgotten the strenuous events, however, of those days when he was known as the young coal baron.

Next week's issue will contain "COINING MONEY; OR, THE BOY PLUNGER OF WALL STREET."

#### 'ZIP' OF CIRCUS DIES, AGED 83

"Zip," circus freak known throughout the world recently died in Bellevue Hospital at eighty-three. He had been suffering from an internal abscess since April 7.

His real name was given at the hospital as William Johnson, his address as "the U. S."

His circus heraldry was flamboyantly placarded in the circus tents as "Zip—What Is It?"

And few could account for the peculiar formation of his skull which puzzled and astounded circus-goers.

"Zip's" manager, O. K. White, of No. 141 East Fifteenth street, was notified last night of his death.

"Zip" was the second circus freak to die within a week. "Kron, the Bearded Lady," was buried only a few days ago.



# WILL, THE WAGON BOY

or, The Diamonds that Came by Express

By GASTON GARNE

(A Serial Story.)

## CHAPTER III

### A Mystery on Maiden Lane

"I shall have to go on the wagon myself, then, it seems. Madame Sandusky, I request you to remain here till I return. Mr. Struthers, it will not be wise for you to attempt to leave the office. Come, Will."

Will had been working for the concern for two years, but this was the first time he had ever attained to the dignity of carrying on his wagon the great Mr. Allen, the millionaire proprietor of Allen's European Express.

"Hurry, Will! Don't lose a minute!" was the order.

Will seized the reins and drove with all possible speed to Maiden Lane.

It would have been unhealthy for Struthers to have left the office after Mr. Allen's departure, for the express magnate was a man of prompt action, and pulling away for a moment at the beginning of the interview before Will was called in, he had telegraphed to the police station and also instructed his porter to let no employee leave the place until he gave the word.

Thus the action of accompanying Will, the wagon boy, in person was quite characteristic of the man.

They reached the old building in the Lane and traveled up the long stairs.

During the short ride Mr. Allen questioned Will closely.

He did not doubt our hero's honesty, for the excellent reason that on a previous occasion, which we need not go into now, it had been fully proved.

Will tried the door of the old lapidary, and found it fast.

"I'm afraid he hasn't come yet, sir," he said.

"Can't we get a look?" replied Mr. Allen. "He may have locked himself in. It is an old trick of these Dutch lapidaries when they are engaged on important work. I've had dealings with them before. Knock, Will."

Will rapped on the door, in an ordinary way at first, then good and loud.

There was no answer. The only other office on this floor was the one in front, for the last flight of stairs had brought them up into a sort of half story, which had been added after the building was constructed.

Will tried the door of this office and found that it was unfastened. The office itself was vacant.

Karl Kutter was, then, the only tenant on the floor, it seemed.

The glass on the lapidary's door had been painted on the inside, so there was no chance to look through it, but there was a transom above which was partly tilted forward. For this Will found use in a moment, as will be presently seen.

Stooping down, he peered through the keyhole.

"There he is, sitting at his bench," he exclaimed. "I can see his back."

"He must open, and he shall!" cried Mr. Allen, thundering on the door with his fist.

"I'm afraid there's something wrong, sir," said Will. "His head is bent forward on the bench. If I could only get up to that transom——"

"You can!" replied Mr. Allen, quickly. "I haven't forgotten how to give a back. Here, Will, get on!"

Mr. Allen bent down and rested his hands upon his knees.

Quick as a wink Will was on his back, at the risk of soiling his expensive coat.

He caught the sill of the transom, pushed up the sash, and looked in.

"Great heavens, Mr. Allen!" he gasped, "there has been murder done here!"

"Murder!"

"Yes, sir! Stand still and let me down, please!"

Will dropped to the floor.

"We had better call the police," he said. "The old man is sitting there with the back of his head all knocked in."

"Call nothing!" cried Mr. Allen. "We must know the worst at once."

Up went his foot, and with one well-directed blow he kicked the door in.

It was as Will had said.

It is not necessary to go into details.

Sufficient to say, there sat the old lapidary at his bench in just the position Will had first seen him, dead and cold.

That he had been surprised at his work and struck on the back of the head with some blunt instrument was evident.

It was also evident that the crime had been committed the evening before, from the general appearance of the body and its surroundings.

The safe stood open, although the door was pushed to.

Upon the bench were several valuable diamonds already finished, and a number of others in the rough.

There was also another in the chuck of the lathe which Karl Kutter appeared to have been in the act of grinding at the moment of the attack.

"This is murder, all right," said Mr. Allen, hoarsely. "Heavens! Who could have done it? This is a bad job. Will, help me look for the Sandusky diamonds. Boy, you must bear witness to everything I do."

Mr. Allen threw open the safe and peered inside.

It was a small, old-fashioned affair, lined with drawers, after the manner of jewelers' safes.

Mr. Allen hastily pulled open each of the drawers in turn.

There was not much in any of them.

A few rough diamonds and a few finished ones. One drawer contained a few precious stones of other kinds.

No trace of the Sandusky diamonds was to be found.

Mr. Allen, who had already briefly examined the body of the dead lapidary, now drew off toward the door.

"This is a case for the police, Will," he said, hoarsely. "I'm afraid—I'm afraid——"



"Of what, sir?" demanded Will.

A horrible thought came creeping into his mind.

What if he should be suspected?

It was possible. When he called at Karl Kutter's the hour was late. It was hardly probable that any one else would have had business with the old man at a later hour still.

But Mr. Allen's reply showed that his thoughts were running in an entirely different direction.

"Could Joe Martin have committed this crime, Will?" demanded Mr. Allen, turning suddenly upon the wagon boy. "An old man like me can never really know one so much younger than himself. You probably know Joe's character better than I do. Tell me what you think, Will."

"It is hardly for me to say, sir. I only work on the wagon. Mr. Martin was far above me, you know."

"Tell me! Tell me!"

"He drinks hard, Mr. Allen. He plays the races, if his own stories are true."

"I know it. He was a hard man to all under him?"

"He certainly was."

"You knew he was discharged by me yesterday?"

"Not until I heard you say so in the office to-day, sir."

"It is so. I had reason to suspect his honesty—good reason. He has robbed me of several thousand dollars."

Will was silent.

He saw that Mr. Allen was fearfully agitated. He did not know what to say.

His employer said it for him.

"I am afraid this is his work. It looks like a put-up job. Will, go for a policeman. I shall put it up to Joe Martin, and yet—heaven give me courage to do the right thing—and yet—Will, here's something you never knew, perhaps, for I strictly forbade Joe to make it known in the office. He is my nephew, my sister's son."

Will knew it—everybody in the express office knew it, although apparently Mr. Allen had not guessed.

Accustomed to obey, Will started for the door. As he did so he noticed lying upon the floor a little jeweled scarf-pin, which he stooped and picked up.

It was silver, and represented a frog. The back was studded with turquoises, and two garnets formed the eyes.

Instantly Will recognized it as one which Joe Martin habitually wore, and he extended it silently toward Mr. Allen, who sprang forward and seized it from the boy's hand.

"Great heavens!" he gasped. "It is Joe's! I gave it to him myself!"

For a moment Mr. Allen appeared much overcome.

"Go!" he whispered, hoarsely. "Go and call the police. I will remain here on guard."

Will went dashing down the stairs.

It looked like Joe Martin surely, but then there were the untouched diamonds on the bench and in the drawers of the safe.

If Martin had been wretch enough to commit murder and steal the diamonds that came by express, why had he not taken all?"

Asking himself these questions, Will had descended the first flight of stairs, and was already

on the second when he saw a man wearing a big, black slouch hat coming slowly up.

He was a large man, and seemed to fill the whole space of each stair upon which he trod.

Will was wondering how he should pass him, and he slowed down.

He moved to the right—so did the man. He then sheered to the left, and the man did the same.

Will stopped short, crowding against the left-hand wall.

The man came on without raising his head.

As he approached the stair upon which Will stood he suddenly lowered his head, and before the wagon boy could realize his intention he butted him heavily in the stomach.

It was an awful blow!

With a cry of pain Will doubled up, and falling upon the stairs, went rolling down to the landing below, where his head struck with fearful force.

In an instant the big man was upon him.

"Well, well, well!" he cried. "What's the matter here? What's the matter here? Great heavens! It is one of our wagon boys!"

Out of the different offices on the floor jewelry dealers and gem workers came hurrying, attracted by the noise.

"Look here," cried the big man, who was certainly a very respectable-looking person. "This poor lad fell downstairs. I'm afraid he has killed himself. He works for me. My name is Allen. I run a European express up on Broadway. My wagon is standing at the door. Help me get him into it, some of you, and I will drive him to the nearest doctor. Dear me! Dear me! His neck is broken, I'm afraid!"

Something was wrong. Poor Will was quite unconscious. Whatever the solution of this mystery on Maiden Lane might prove to be, there could be no doubt that Will had fallen into the hands of dangerous crooks, whose motive for thus assaulting the wagon boy was in some way connected with the crime which has been committed on the floor above.

During the days that followed Will Walker remained among the missing, and the crime committed on Maiden Lane came to be laid up against the wagon boy.

From one utterly unknown outside of his own little circle, Will's name suddenly became public property.

The yellow journals from New York to San Francisco gave up front columns to his story, published his picture, and openly accused him of murdering Karl Kutter and running away with Madame Sandusky's diamonds.

They talked of his wonderful shrewdness, and his nerve in coming to work next morning and accompanying Mr. Allen to the scene of his crime.

The theory was that Will did this with the view of turning suspicion away from him, and so giving himself a chance to make his escape.

The police and private detectives hunted him everywhere, but without success.

As he came originally from England, it was believed that he had taken passage on some outgoing steamer in disguise.

(To be continued.)



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## ITEMS OF INTEREST

## METEORITE FALL

A large meteorite fell a short time ago in the grounds of Salop County Asylum, England. Doctor Hallsworth, one of the medical officers, saw it drop into a bush. It was quite hot when picked up, and porous and light as pumicestone.

## OSTRICH SKIN SHOES

We have recently had many odd leathers such as shark skin, porpoise, etc., and now the ostrich comes forward to help leather shortage. Shoes made of leather from ostrich skins will outlast leather. The ostrich always had a reputation of being a tough old bird.

## A MEXICAN PREHISTORIC CITY

A prehistoric city has recently been discovered at the foot of the volcano Ixtaccihuatl. The city is apparently four miles long and three miles wide. The city is surrounded by a wall and there are twenty-eight pyramids. There is a possibility of the ruins being as famous as Tectihuacan.

## PLOWS UP \$19,300

Fortune turned her smiling face on John Brazell, of Lansing, La., when the plow which he was operating unearthed \$19,300 in gold. The sum was found on the old Patrick Callahan farm where Brazell was working as a farm hand. The money was in a glass jar and is believed to have been buried on the farm for many years.

## WHEN THE FIRE WAS CARRIED TO THE FIRE HOUSE

For the first time in the history of Allentown, Pa., a blaze was taken to the firemen when a trolley car that caught fire on the main street, but far from the city's centre, was run in front of an engine house, where the flames were extinguished. Starting for the repair house, the car again caught on fire and an excited pedestrian sent in the alarm. The trolley kept going, however, and the firemen had to chase it half a mile before they overtook it and again quenched the flames.

## KNIFE BLADE IN FACE UNDETECTED A MONTH

For nearly a month John Tyler Hines, a negro of 142 West 129th Street, walked the streets of Harlem and went about his regular business with a "pain in the jaw."

It developed that the pain was the result of a six-inch knife blade being firmly embedded in his face under the left cheek. Dr. Walter I. Delph of the Edgecombe Sanitarium at 328 West 137th Street extracted the knife blade.

Hines had a little argument, as he called it, with some of his friends. One of the friends left the knife blade in his cheek as the argument progressed, but Hines did not know it. He thought he had merely been scratched.

The cut was treated by an ambulance surgeon, but a few days later Hines's jaw felt sore, so he went to Doctor Delph. There was no indication of a serious wound, and Doctor Delph at first believed the man to be suffering from a partial paralysis of the jaw, and treated him accordingly. He applied electrical treatment and with the knife action as a conductor of the electrical current, Hines's face ached very badly.

Then Doctor Delph took some X-ray photographs of the face, and the presence of the blade was detected. It extended from the left cheek just under the brain cavity to a point in front of the right ear.

## LAUGHS

"They call this a 'dumb' waiter," observed Mrs. Gossip, "but it has told me the secrets of every family in the house."

"Oh, dearie, I just thought about asking you to fix the stovepipes for me." "Just thought about it? It's what I call a put-up job."

Inspector in Chicago Police Station—What's your name? Prisoner—Patrick Sweeney. What nationality are you? An Irishman. What's your business? An Italian organ grinder!

Mrs. Caller—So your husband is out cycling? Why aren't you scouring the country with him on your bicycle? Mrs. Wheeler—Oh, I have to stay home to scour the country off his clothes.

A quarrelsome couple, having exhausted many subjects, came to discussing tombstones, and the husband asked: "My dear, what kind of stone do you suppose they will give me when I die?" "Brimstone," was the reply.

"I thought you were never going to speak to Harold again as long as you lived," said one girl. "I know I said so," replied the other. "It was my fault that I broke the resolution." "How did it happen?" "He called me over the telephone."

Mrs. O'Brien—Sure, a dhrop now an' thin is a comfort; but aren't ye afraid, Mrs. Hinnessy, ye'll get the habit? Mrs. Hennessy—Niver a bit! Me ould man's been dhrinkin' it stiddy these forty years past, an' he's niver got the habit.



## THE SMUGGLERS

Ned Wilson was one of the best men I ever had in my employ.

I had detailed him for work on many very important cases, and he had always done his duty faithfully.

He had no bad habits, and was possessed of about equal parts of those two most important qualities in a detective—caution and courage.

He was unmarried, and seemed to care little for the society of women, being indissolubly wedded to his profession.

I did not know, when I sent him to Rocky Beach to try and locate the base of operations and secure the arrest of a most daring band of smugglers, that he was madly in love with pretty Ella Waters, a boarder at the Sea Girt House, and that his devotion to her would cause him to neglect his work.

It all turned out right in the end, however, and as Ned and Ella are happily married now, there can be no impropriety in printing the story as it was told by New York.

Early in the spring of the present year, information was lodged with the secret service department that a bold and skillful band of smugglers were carrying on their illegal business by means of several lines of ocean smugglers.

Some of the smuggled goods were traced to Rocky Beach, and it was ascertained that the chief of the smugglers had a cottage there, which he occupied with his family.

The great ocean steamers passed within a few miles of the beach, and it was evident that the smuggled goods were surreptitiously removed in passing.

I cabled the facts to one of my men stationed abroad, and instructed him to shadow the next one of the band who took passage, and to keep him in sight night and day.

I arranged that he should signal to another man, whom I stationed with a steam launch on the shore at Rocky Beach, if the smugglers should attempt to throw overboard any packages of goods, and the latter was instructed to be on the lookout, and as soon as he should see the signal to put off and secure the criminals in the very act.

I felt satisfied that an important arrest would soon be made.

My man abroad cabled one day that he would take passage the following day on the Ocean Queen, and that one of his fellow-passengers was a member of the band, and that his trunks were undoubtedly filled with valuable goods which were liable to import duty.

I communicated with my man at Rocky Beach, and when the steamer passed he saw the signal agreed upon, and immediately headed toward the steamer in the launch, with a crew of determined men on board.

The launch was provided with a powerful electric light, and when its rays were thrown upon the surrounding water objects could be seen for a considerable distance in every direction.

It disclosed no boat, however, and although they cruised up and down the beach until daylight, no smuggled goods were landed.

The man aboard the steamer reported to me as follows:

"Obedient to your instructions, per cable, I secured the services of a skilled assistant, and we two never lost sight of the supposed smuggler for a moment, except when he was in his stateroom. I was on watch when we passed Rocky Beach and am satisfied—although, owing to the fact that the fellow was in his stateroom, I did not catch him in the act—that several packages of lace, in water-tight rubber bags, were thrown overboard."

The next steamer that arrived had among its passengers a smuggler and one of my men.

When the vessel passed Rocky Beach the signal agreed upon went up from the deck of the steamer, and the steam launch, with its electric light streaming out over the water, made a thorough search for the boat of the smugglers.

As before, no boat was discovered, and I was puzzled.

When, after six repeated trials by my men, the smugglers pitched overboard packages which mysteriously disappeared as soon as they touched the water, I detailed Ned Wilson to take hold of the case, and he went to Rocky Beach.

He was too conscientious to wholly neglect his business, but he paid pretty Ella Waters a great deal of attention, and steamer after steamer passed, signal after signal went up, and the steam launch made cruise after cruise.

In spite of these efforts, however, no goods were seized, and no smugglers were arrested.

Wilson found time between the intervals of love-making to do one piece of good work.

He made the acquaintance of the supposed chief of the smugglers, and was invited to his cottage to dinner.

He visited his new acquaintance several times, and had opportunity to carefully search his house in the hope of finding smuggled articles.

Every night Ned made love to pretty Ella on the veranda of the hotel, and on one occasion allowed a steamer to pass and signal him without getting out the launch.

He determined never to be caught napping again; and thereafter he did his love-making on a tree-shaded knoll some distance away, from the summit of which he could see far out upon the ocean.

It is my opinion that the lovers paid little attention to the passage of time, and one night, when they parted, and Ella ran up the porch stairs to go to her room, it was past midnight.

Her room was on the second floor, and she usually entered it through a window which opened upon the porch.

The bed she occupied was an old-fashioned, high-posted affair, and stood with its tall headboard facing the window.

As Ella approached the window this night her eyes fixed upon the bed, she saw, standing out in bold relief upon the polished surface of the headboard the crouching figure of a man.

A cry of terror escaped her, and she started back.

Instantly the shadow disappeared.

She looked quickly over her shoulder, but there was no one behind her; and after a moment's hesitation, she peered into the room again.



Once more the crouching figure was revealed to her frightened eyes, but when she drew back it disappeared.

It was evident that a man, bent on robbery, murder or both, was concealed in her room, and hastily lowering the window, she turned to leave the porch.

Ned was walking slowly away from the foot of the steps along one of the gravel paths.

She called to him softly.

He came toward her quickly.

"What's the matter, dear?" he asked.

"Come up here—quick!" she whispered, bending over the balcony. "There's a man in my room."

At this startling intelligence Ned rushed up the steps and soon stood beside the trembling girl.

"Where is the villain?" he demanded, in a hoarse whisper.

"I saw the shadow of his crouching form on the headboard of my bed when I opened the window," she answered. "Oh, Ned, be careful!"

"I'll fix him!" was the answer, and, drawing his revolver, Ned stepped to the window and threw it open.

As he thrust his head into the room, his eyes were fixed upon the headboard, and he plainly saw the shadow of a crouching figure.

"Ha!" he cried. "Now I've got you!" and he leaped into the room.

He lit the gas, and peered into every corner, under the bed, behind the bureau, and into a large wardrobe.

He found no midnight assassin concealed anywhere, and, laughing a little sheepishly, he turned out the gas, and stepped out through the window.

"There's no man in there, Ella," he said. "The shadow we saw must have been our own."

Thus assured, Ella approached the window, but she could not keep her eyes off the headboard, and again the crouching figure was revealed to her.

"Oh, Ned!" she cried, "I saw it again. There is someone inside. I know there is."

Wilson walked to the window, and stood beside her.

"It's your own shadow," he said. "Now we'll look in together, and there'll be two shadows."

But there were not.

Only the same crouching figure was for an instant revealed to them, and this time Ned noticed a sou'wester on his head.

He cocked his revolver, and with his eyes fixed upon the headboard, strained his ears to catch the faintest sound which would give him a clue to the man's hiding-place.

Suddenly the figure appeared, and he had a good view of it.

A cry of amazement escaped him, and quickly withdrawing his head, he ran to the balcony and looked out toward the rock-sheltered cove, on the extreme point of whose further promontory was perched a lighthouse with a revolving light.

"Ella," he cried excitedly, "go to the window and tell me when the shadow appears. Don't start when you see it, and notice if it doesn't show itself at regular intervals."

She did as bidden, and Ned's face glowed with grim triumph, as he made careful note of the position of the lighthouse, and learned from Ella's

whispered reports of the appearance and disappearance of the shadowy figure on the headboard, that its movements were governed by the revolving light.

"Ella," he said finally—and she noticed that he was very much excited—"I've discovered the smugglers," and his voice sank to a whisper as he explained to her what he had learned. "Now go to bed like a good girl. There is no man concealed in your room."

In ten minutes' time, aided by his ready assistants, a boat had been launched, and they were pulling swiftly across the dark water toward the lighthouse.

Ned, with a revolver tightly grasped in his hand, stood in the bow.

Suddenly the dark outlines of a boat loomed up in front of him, and he saw plainly revealed the same crouching figure that he had seen on the headboard of the bed in Ella's room.

It was the old lobster fisherman, Jim Jobson, and he was busily engaged hauling something out of the water.

"Surrender!" cried Ned, as the two boats came together, and he leaped into Jobson's craft and thrust his revolver into the old fisherman's face.

He threw up his hands with sullen reluctance, and a pair of handcuffs were snapped on his wrists.

In his boat were nearly a dozen compactly filled rubber bags, which, when opened, were found to contain hundreds of dollars' worth of silks and laces.

He confessed everything; the chief of the band was arrested in bed, and finding that Jobson had betrayed him, he broke down completely, gave the names of his assistants, and told the officers where quantities of the smuggled goods were stored.

Jobson's lobster-fishing habits were made use of only as a blind.

Of course I was overjoyed at the capture of the smugglers, all of whom were arrested, convicted and are now serving out long sentences.

#### MACKEREL, RELEASED IN 1923, BORE FEDERAL BUREAU'S TAG IN TAIL

A young mackerel, which wore a small metal tag in its tail telling whom it might concern that it had been released by the United States Bureau of Fisheries in 1923, was found the other day in a catch brought to Fulton Market by the fishing steamer Alice and Mildred, commanded by Captain John Morash.

The Gallilee Interstate Fishing Company, which owns the Alice and Mildred, forwarded the fish with its built-in metal document, to Director O'Malley of the United States Fisheries Commission.

The Government released several thousand mackerel in 1923 with the Bureau of Fisheries insignia riveted into their tails. It was expected that their capture at different times and places would help the Government trace the mackerel migrations, which are not wholly understood. It was figured out the other day that the young mackerel had done a mileage of between 10,000 and 15,000.



## FROM EVERYWHERE

## COLD PORTO RICO

The average temperature of Porto Rico, 76 degrees Fahrenheit, is lower than that of any important island of the American tropics.

## TRULY A LIFETIME

J. S. Jacobson, a farmer of Thomas County, Kansas, says he has a watch that he has carried for sixty-two years, and never in that time has he had it repaired or even cleaned, but still it is an accurate timepiece.

## AUTOMATIC STATION LIGHTS

Small railroad stations along the lines of the big Western railroads which do not have night agents are lighted at the approach of the train and the lights extinguished at its departure by means of automatic switches placed at short distances from the buildings.

## EASTER

The name "Osgtara," or "Easter," was the name given by the ancient horsemen to the season of the year in which the festival of Ostra, Goddess of Life and Spring, was celebrated—although since the time of Christ, Easter has come to have a very different significance for the majority of people.

## A RARE BULLET

Deeply imbedded in the solid trunk of a tree in Deerings, Oak, where it probably had rested for about two hundred and twenty-five years, a bullet was disclosed when Harman Swanson, an employee of the park department, at Portland, Maine, felled the tree. Examination of the bullet showed that it is of a kind used more than two centuries ago, and it probably was fired in the Indian battle of September 28, 1869.

## HELD FOR OSTRICH KILLING

William C. McIntyre, who is accused of killing an ostrich in the Franklin Park Zoo, was held in \$1,000 bail in Municipal Court. The charges were breaking and entering, cruelty to animals and trespassing.

Governor, an aged, mean-tempered but vigorous male ostrich, was found dead the other morning, evidently killed in a terrific combat during the night. The bird was known to be a dangerous fighter and accordingly had been caged alone. Why anyone should have attacked the creature alone and how he could have killed the bird bare-handed mystified the police.

McIntyre was said to have identified a blood-stained handkerchief and an overcoat found within the high fence as his own. He said he had dim recollection of a fight, but could not recall that an ostrich was his opponent.

LONDON THEATRE TO STAGE PLAY  
FOR RADIO ONLY

London soon will have a theatre where plays will be staged for broadcasting and not for the benefit of speculators.

An attempt was made recently at Covent Garden Opera House, where an opera was broadcast, no stage setting or costumes being used.

The public was admitted to the performance for a small amount, which, however, defrayed the cost of the production, which has therefor recommended itself to broadcasters.

## X-RAY REVEALS SECRETS OF MATTER

How scientists have solved the secrets of the structure of matter by using invisible rays to detect the presence of particles so small that they cannot be seen under the most powerful microscope was told to the Ohio Academy of Science at its annual session here by three nationally known scientists, Dr. H. G. Gale of the University of Chicago and Dr. Edward Mack and Dr. W. J. McCaughey of Ohio State University.

The scientists told how X-rays, the beams of which are invisible, were used to detect the arrangements of electrons in atoms, of atoms in molecules and of molecules in crystals. This, according to modern theories, is the structure of matter.

Atoms, Doctor Gale explained, have nuclei composed of positive and negative electrons, the negative electrons revolving around the nuclei like planets around the central sun. He also pointed out that there was good reason for believing that electrons were composed entirely of electricity and that their mass or weight was only a manifestation of electrical force. According to this view nothing exists in the universe except electricity.

Doctor Mack showed how X-ray spectroscopic analysis revealed the way the atoms were combined into molecules of chemical compounds, and said it had been discovered that some molecules had their atoms arranged in circles while in other they were arranged in chains.

Experiments with films of oil on water enabled scientists to measure the length of these so-called chain molecules, he said, adding that such films continued to spread out until they were only one molecule thick, so that the length of the chain molecules could be obtained by measuring the thickness of the film.

Doctor McCaughey showed how the crystal was the fundamental structure in solids, and told how scientists had revealed that such materials as wool fibers and the fibers of plants as well as minerals, and how X-ray analysis disclosed the arrangement of the molecules into crystals.

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ETHEL ROSEMAN, PUBLISHER AND EDITOR  
219 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.



## GOOD READING

## CHAMPION WEIGHT-CARRIER

In a dockers' weight-carrying competition in France the winner carried a burden of 716 pounds a distance of 13 yards.

## TREACHEROUS STEER

For twelve years the same steer, acting as a decoy, has led his unsuspecting fellows to slaughter at the Philadelphia abattoir, living in security and comfort on the wages of his infamy.

## WHITE SPARROW

An "albino" sparrow has been seen at Monument Beach for several weeks with a small flock of English sparrows. The bird is entirely white with pink eyes and very light legs and feet.

## LARGEST DOG

The largest dog at the London bench show was a St. Bernard weighing 187 pounds, and the smallest was a Papillon that tipped the scales at two and one-half pounds.

## FISHING IN TREES

H. E. Minter of Jakin, Ga., has a hunting dog that has treed a 28-pound carp. The river nearby flooded its banks and when it receded left a great number of fish in the tops of fallen trees. In such a tree the dog found his fish.

## SELLING UNBORN SHEEP

In the wool-growing States of the West it is a common occurrence for thousands of sheep to be sold before they are born. In Wyoming a deal has been made for the sale of 50,000 lambs at \$7 a head, not one of which is yet alive.

## WASHING GOLD

Gold is separated from the dirt and gravel by washing and also by the aid of quicksilver, which absorbs the gold, forming an amalgam which has to be treated with heat to extract the gold. Books on gold mining can be purchased of any dealer in scientific books. If they do not keep what you want in stock they will procure them for you from the publishers.

## MARKING BABIES

New-born babies at a Baltimore hospital will have their names written on their backs with ink hereafter to prevent mixups. Formerly they were provided with bead necklaces. The ink wears off in about three weeks and by that time the mother is expected to know her own baby in a million.

## SPRING TO REVEAL GOLD HUNTERS' LUCK

Hundreds of claims already have been staked at Red Lake, but not until Spring dissolves the thick crust of snow and ice that rests upon the land will prospectors know their luck, according to Charlie Hendricks, who went in with the Dome Mine party in January, before the rush started.

Hendricks has realized already upon the three claims he staked. Retaining a one-tenth interest

in his properties, he disposed of the remaining nine-tenths for a sum in the thousands.

Picturesque features of his trip are told by the ex-soldier prospector. The Red Lake country has a population of Indians of tribes unknown to Hendricks, and wherever their own family settlements are found the men are discovered to be wearing serge suits and fancy colored or pleated suits and fancy colored or pleated shirts, without overcoats of any kind, although the temperature was 55 degrees below zero when Hendricks was there.

Hendricks says the Indian will not take serviceable clothes from the Hudson's Bay posts. He wants fancy stuff and will pay fabulous prices in rich furs for trinkets. He is a simple child of the forest and snows and is laughing almost constantly when in conversation. His coat is covered with colored buttons and pins.

The Dome party on the way in purchased a quarter of moose from an Indian family. When asked the price the squaw said 75 cents. They offered her three quarters, which she refused, demanding nickels and dimes. They scraped together seven nickels and offered her all the silver. She selected the nickels and rejected the larger pieces, laughing gleefully as if she had swindled the palefaces. The Indians have no use for paper money and apparently think that the more small silver pieces the more money they have.

Hendricks came out alone with a dog team of eight "cropples" and had to pull his toboggan the last twenty miles. The second morning out he climbed out of his sleeping bag to find one of his team the mother of nine puppies, which were scrambling around in the frigid temperature trying to find a warm spot near the mother's side. He tried to bring the little family in, but the mother proved troublesome and he had to leave them in a shack along the trail. He left a days' feed of fish and asked parties he passed along the trail to feed them as they passed the shack.

"These prospectors would go ten miles off the trail to feed a dog," Hendricks said. "I sent word to the owner at Red Lake of where I had left them. They were fully protected by human friendship."

The huskies are savage, according to Hendricks, being ready to sink their fangs into the throat of the kindest master at any time. Their only pleasure in life is fighting. At the nightly halt each dog must be collared and chained to a different tree. They will eat anything, having a particular appetite for their harness. If left loose at night no leather would remain in camp by morning.

The driver must watch that no dog turns at a temporary halt and looks at his team mate behind; as a fight starts instantly, and to stop it the dogs have to be beaten almost into unconsciousness.

On the way in the Dome party found a moose hide left by the Indians and served it as supper to the dogs. They ate it, hair and all, apparently enjoying it. On two frozen fish a day they will work like truck horses for days on end.



# LITTLE ADS

Write to Riker & King, Advertising Offices, 530 Broadway, New York City, or 29 East Madison Street, Chicago, for particulars about advertising in this magazine.

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## HELP WANTED

**QUALIFY** for \$150-\$300 railroad jobs. Firemen, Brakemen, Baggage men, Sleeping Car or Train Porter. 238 Railway Bureau, East St. Louis, Ill.

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**EXCHANGE LETTERS.** Make new friends. Private introductions. Satisfaction guaranteed. Particulars free. Good Fellowship Club, Reading, Penna.

**MARRY—Business girl, 27, worth \$73,000; widow, 48, \$36,000; girl, 19, \$40,000.** Descriptions and photos free. Mrs. Warn, 8634 S. Figueroa Street, Los Angeles, Calif.

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**MARRY—Free** photographs, directory and descriptions of wealthy members. Pay when married. New Plan Co., Dept 36, Kansas City, Mo.

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**MARRY—MARRIAGE DIRECTORY** with photos and descriptions free. Pay when married. The Exchange, Dept. 545, Kansas City, Mo.

**MARRY—Write** for big new directory with photos and descriptions. Free. National Agency, Dept. A. 4606. Station E., Kansas City, Mo.

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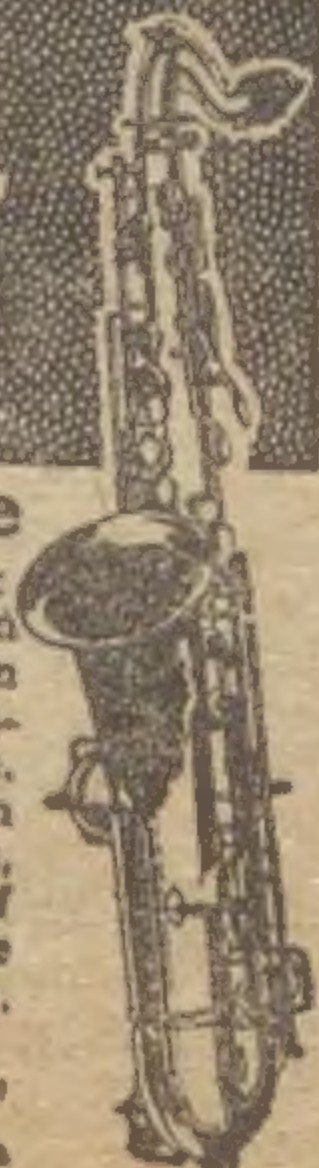
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